An Assessment of Service Quality, Benefits and Satisfaction with Community Libraries in South Australia

Prepared for: Public Library Services

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Australia's University of Enterprise

Executive Summary

This report details the findings of the CERM PI, UniSA 2020 report on libraries, with four key areas identified for consideration:

- Establishment of a broad-based demographic picture of library users in South Australia,
- Assessment of perception of the quality of service provided by each participating library,
- Identification of the benefits sought from attendance at the library, and how it contributes to well-being,
- Perception of overall satisfaction and recommendation of the library

The data collection comprised of an online survey. Surveys were structured around identifying current usage profiles, service quality and benefit assessment. The survey also incorporated open-ended response options, where respondents were encouraged to provide richer detail on their responses to the survey items. A total of 27 libraries participated in the survey (12 from metropolitan Adelaide and 15 from regional South Australia), with a total of 4567 respondents (1477 from regional libraries and 3090 from metropolitan libraries).

Service quality, satisfaction, recommendation and benefit attainment benchmarks were established for South Australian libraries as an outcome of this survey. These benchmarks related to: All libraries, metropolitan libraries and regional libraries. These 'benchmark' figures are the ones outlined in this report. All libraries involved in the study obtained an individual report with their figures assessed against the relevant benchmarks.

Based upon the overall data provided in this report, the following key findings for consideration emerged from the review:

The profile of respondents to the survey strongly reflected an older, female dominated, Australian-born demographic. Consideration of ways to cater to this group, whilst also considering strategies to connect with other groups (for example, the youth demographic) may warrant strategic consideration.

Awareness of what is happening at libraries is dominated by the bricks and mortar library itself. However, social media is having an impact, particularly in regional areas where Facebook was identified as a key information source. Twitter, however, is having almost zero cut through. The Libraries SA App appears to have a consistent followership and take up, and strategies to consider expansion of the App and buy-in by users may be warranted.

Whilst awareness of the presence of digital media at libraries is high, take up is notably lower. Given the importance given to digital collections identified in the survey, consideration of ways to improve the usage and take up of digital forms of media may be appropriate.

Overall, libraries are perceived highly positively by their users. Staff in particular were singled out for praise by users, with satisfaction and recommendation also being particularly positive. Any strategic plans or planned changes to library operations should consider the potential impact on this highly positive perception.

Attendance at the library provides a range of important benefits to users. These include enjoyment, well-being, connection with community and education. Stories told by users identified the library as a critical nexus in the community, a hub of social and personal connection and growth that plays a key role in community capital and well-being.

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Introduction and Background

Rationale for the Review

This report is the outcome of a partnering between CERM PI at the University of South Australia, the Public Libraries Service (PLS) of South Australia, and a group of 27 public council operated libraries across South Australia.

It became apparent through discussions with both individual local council libraries, as well as PLS, that all parties were interested in assessing the role and significance of libraries to local communities. Two factors in particular were of key interest to the individual libraries:

- the benefits that libraries provide to their customers, and therefore their communities
- the perception of both the level of the quality of service, and satisfaction, customers have with their libraries

A number of individual local councils in South Australia have incorporated customer feedback approaches for library customers, either currently or in the past. However, this number has been relatively small and studies have been limited to measures of customer service quality or customer satisfaction. Hence, there has been less focus on the benefits library facilities provide to the public and their local community

Incorporating the identification and creation of benchmarks at the state level, this report is an important step towards establishing a baseline for the types of benefits people in South Australian communities seek when they attend a local library, as well as customer service quality and satisfaction. Furthermore, the report links these measures to comments from customers to get a richer more detailed picture on what the library customer in South Australia is seeking, and how service provision hinders or facilities this.

Background to the Public Library Services and the Significance of Libraries to Communities in South Australia

Public Library Services and the Structure of Libraries in South Australia

Public Library Services is a state government body established to provide support services to public libraries operating (usually via local government councils) throughout the state.

The structure of public libraries in South Australia is defined by a Memorandum of Agreement between the numerous local government authorities and the state government. As outlined on the PLS website[1],

"Local government provides the significant proportion of the funds for public libraries (approximately 75%), with the State providing key funding which supports the 'network' approach to the provision of services across the state. This approach is underpinned by the services provided to public libraries by Public Library Services (PLS); a business unit of the Libraries Board of South Australia operating within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and funded from within the State's funding to public libraries".

In addition, public libraries in South Australia can be distinguished as being one of two types:

- Owned and operated by the individual local council. This typically comes with a State Government subsidy (see above)
- School Community Libraries. These generally are predominately funded by the State Government, with some additional funding from the relevant local government authority. In most cases these libraries operate in communities with low populations, (less than 3000 people), making them more abundant in rural and regional areas

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1 Source: https://onecard.network/client/en_AU/sapubliclibraries/?rm=WHO+FUNDS+SA%27SO%7C%7C%7C1%7C%7C%7CO%7C%7C%7Ctrue&dt=list

The Significance of Libraries to Communities

The role of a library seems relatively straightforward. It selects, acquires, organises, interprets and disseminates information and knowledge. However, this fails to identify the critical role libraries play within local communities. A library is more than a building, the collection of books it contains, the other resources it has to offer, the overall service it provides and its staff. It is an important component of a community; a facility that can create a sense of belonging, where integration and fulfilment emerge when members feel their needs will be met by the range of services that are provided. This is notable, because a library plays an important role in society by having the potential to create a stronger sense of community for everyone.

Libraries reflect the intellectual development, educational and cultural needs of the community in which they serve[2]. This means they change with their communities. Since the late 1990s, public libraries have undergone significant changes in response to a rapidly changing social and technological environment, becoming more flexible and adaptable to change. In some ways, this has helped libraries reinvent their importance to the local community. For example, although books are still the main reason why people still appear to visit a library, it is no longer just a place for quiet reading. It has become a facility that offers wider information resources, providing opportunities to develop new networks and learn new skills as well as offer a range of secondary services like food and drink and activities for children.

Given these changes, a public library can also be a source or focal point for the creation and maintenance of social capital in a local community. It can encourage opportunities for greater civic engagement and create facilitate programs that bring different parts of the community together. Accordingly, it can help to break social and cultural barriers and foster greater social inclusion by providing a meeting place where local dialogue is fostered and disseminated. It can devise ways of building trust and cooperation, help reduce local crime and improve public health in the local community by fostering social inclusion through community engagement, whilst at the same time reducing social isolation. In some ways it has become the central feature of a community that now provides a range of services that members cannot get elsewhere. In ways like this, the library becomes the local connector – the link between the development and acquisition of knowledge and information and how this is distributed to its users.

Given the double focus of the study, the optimum research method had to be considered to most effectively and reliably explore perceptions of service quality and satisfaction that users have with their library, as well as the benefits they sought from their attendance at the library. It was determined that whilst focus groups and interviews may be ideal, time and access limitations to an appropriate selection of candidates across 27 libraries would make this approach time consuming and difficult to operationalise. Thus, it was determined to employ online quantitative surveys that incorporated specific and general open-ended questions offering the opportunity for a more detailed response by each participant.

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2 Source: Saleh (2011)

Research Design and Methodology

Instrument Design and Development

A single data collection instrument was developed for the study:

- The Perceptions of Service Quality, Benefits and Satisfaction with Libraries survey (administered online)

Surveys were conducted between January-March 2020. The procedure and rationale for the survey is outlined below.

Survey design

A survey for customers of each community public library (N=27) was developed for the review. It comprised distinct sections that were based around the following key areas of interest:

- A demographic profile of the respondent
- Service quality, recommendation and satisfaction assessment
- Benefits assessment
- Open-ended comments and responses

Conceptual background to the survey and measurement

Service quality

Service quality may be seen as a customer's evaluation of the quality of the service they receive compared to their expectations held in relation to that service in that context. The concept of a service quality measurement came to the fore in the 1980s and 1990s with the work of Parasuraman and colleagues in developing the SERVQUAL model. This model suggested that service quality could be seen as comprising five dimensions (RATER):

- **R**esponsiveness
- **A**ssurance (of service)
- **T**angibles (these include cleanliness, book repository etc)
- **E**mpathy
- **R**eliability

It is apparent from the above RATER model that many aspects of a service (notably staff) may well have an impact across multiple, if not all, of these dimensions. The provision of high-quality service has been consistently linked to overall satisfaction with a service, as well as increased patronage, loyalty toward and recommendation of that service. With a strong history in the marketing field, service quality assessment has been conducted across many types of services, including, dental, restaurants, hospitality, tourism, sport and recreation, botanic gardens and parks, and libraries.

Benefits

Benefits, in relation to participation in recreational activities, have been defined as 'goals or positive outcomes desired by [the individual]' (Driver et al., 2000, p259). Thus, most research examining benefits has conceptualised benefits people receive from participation in a given behaviour or activity as (invariably positive) outcomes they gain from their participation. Whilst there has been a strong body of literature that has explored the specific benefits that can be attained from participation in, for example, areas such as fitness, sporting activities, outdoor recreation, and physical activity in general, there has not been a commensurate amount of attention exploring the benefits that may be attainable through involvement and attendance at a library.

Instrument

The instrument contained four main sections.

Usage and demographics

The first section explored how respondents utilised the library, including questions relating to their main activities, their usage and awareness of library services, and their patterns of usage. These included questions in relation to who they attended the library with, the day and times of the week they most typically attended and the typical duration of their stay.

Finally, this first section then asked respondents to provide some demographic information about themselves. This included their:

- age
- gender
- place of birth (and if overseas if from a non-English speaking background)
- employment status
- home postcode
- whether they had children and, if so, how many
- whether they had a chronic illness or disability
- whether they identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Service quality

The second section explored the respondents' perceptions of service quality of aspects of the library. Informed by the SERVQUAL work of Parasuraman and colleagues, the service quality items were identified from a suite of common items employed in public sector recreation service provision used by the CERM PI group. This initial group were then tailored to public libraries via discussion with stakeholders and library staff in relation to what were the most notable aspects of assessable service in public libraries. From this process a total of 20 items of service quality in relation to operations of the library service were identified. These included items relating to cleanliness of facilities, lighting, fast and reliable WiFi, selection of books, computers, programs and behaviour of other library patrons. An additional 6 items were identified pertaining to library staff. These included their presentation, friendliness, willingness to help, identifiability and competence.

Service quality was assessed via the expectancy-disconfirmation method of Parasuraman and colleagues. This approach requires asking respondents to provide their expectation for each service quality item, and then their perception of the performance of the service in delivering that item. The 'gap' is then identified, with a more negative gap suggesting that the level of performance is not meeting the expectations they hold for that aspect of service. Both expectations and performance were measured on a non-balanced 6-point scale ranging from 1 'disagree' to 6 'very strongly agree'[3].

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3 Non-balanced scales are used where services have historically shown a strong skew to the positive, in order to be more refined in identifying differences in customer's perceptions at that positive end of the distribution.

Benefits

The third main section of the questionnaire focused on the benefits users were seeking from their time at the library. The scale incorporated 8 benefit items, again identified via consultation with library staff. These included items relating to education, enjoyment, relaxation, socialising, and confidence, among others. Following the approach employed for the service quality scales, measurement was across two dimensions:

- Importance of the benefit
- Attainment of the benefit

Again, the expectancy-disconfirmation approach was used to identify a 'gap' between how important the benefit was perceived and how well the benefit was attained via the library experience. However, unlike the service quality scale, a 5-point scale was employed. This scale was balanced, from 1 'not at all', through to 5 'very high'.

Customer satisfaction, advocacy and open-ended responses

The final section of the survey began with respondents being asked how satisfied they were, overall, as a customer of the library. This was measured on a 7-point scale from 1 'very dissatisfied' through to 7 'very satisfied'. Next, they were asked how likely they would be to recommend the library to others, again measured on a 7-point scale, this time from 1 'highly unlikely' through to 7 'highly likely'.

The survey then concluded with three open-ended questions. This allowed respondents to go into more detail about their experience at the library as well as addressing any aspects that may have emerged through the survey. The first requested respondents to identify what they saw as the best aspects of the library. This was followed by a question asking them to identify areas of the library they felt could be improved. Finally, respondents were provided with a further opportunity to make any other comments about the library.

Results

As mentioned previously, a total of 27 library services took part in the survey. 15 regional library services and 12 metropolitan library services collected data via the online survey. A total of 4567 users of libraries in South Australia completed the survey, 1477 from regional libraries and 3090 from metropolitan libraries. A list of the library services involved in the study is included in Appendix A.

Demographic Profile of Library Users: Regional and Metropolitan Differences

The profile of the respondents gives us an insight into the people who responded to the survey, and whether or not specific groups are over-represented among the respondents. In the following tables, the profile of respondents is outlined. Table 1 outlines the gender profile of respondents, with female respondents comprising just over three quarters of the total sample (77.7%). Breaking this down further, the proportion of female respondents was higher in regional libraries (80.7%) compared to metropolitan libraries (74.3%).

Table 1
Gender of respondents
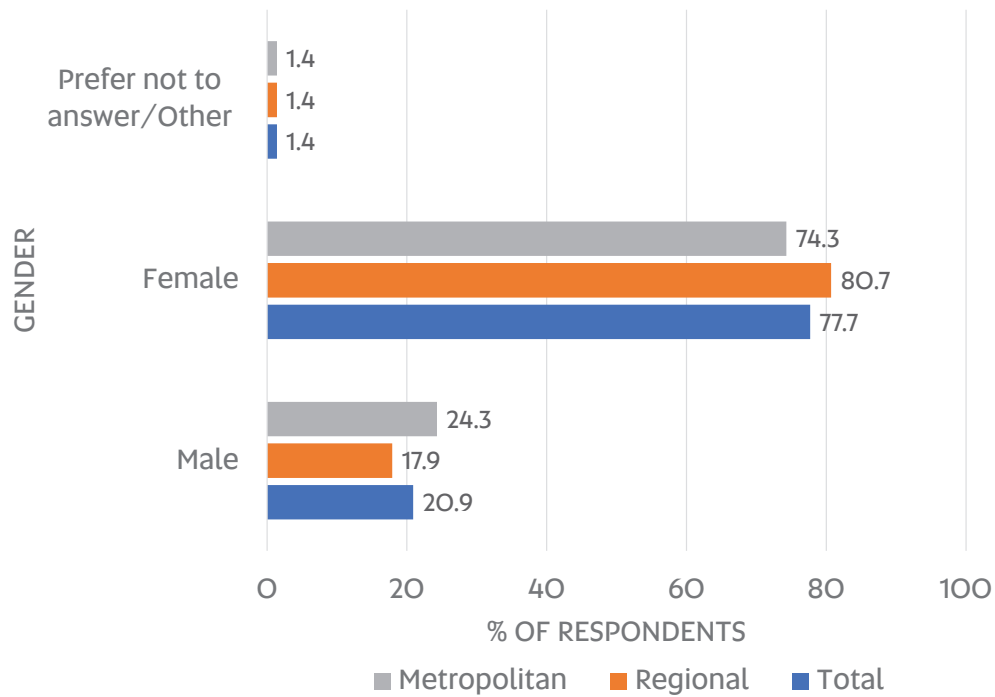
Table 2 highlights that only 8.1% of the respondents to the survey were aged under 30. The demographic profile of library users shows a general trend towards higher usage in older demographics compared to younger cohorts. Metropolitan and regional library respondents both demonstrate a similar pattern in this regard.

Table 2
Age of respondents

Age group	Metropolitan	Regional	Total
Prefer not to say	1.4	0.5	0.9
70 years and over	20.5	22.1	21.4
60-69 years of age	23.1	21	22
50-59 years of age	13.9	16.7	15.4
40-49 years of age	15.8	16.7	16.3
30-39 years of age	17.5	14.5	15.9
20-29 years of age	5.8	6.6	6.2
15-19 years of age	1.9	1.9	1.9

% OF RESPONDENTS

■ Metropolitan   ■ Regional   ■ Total
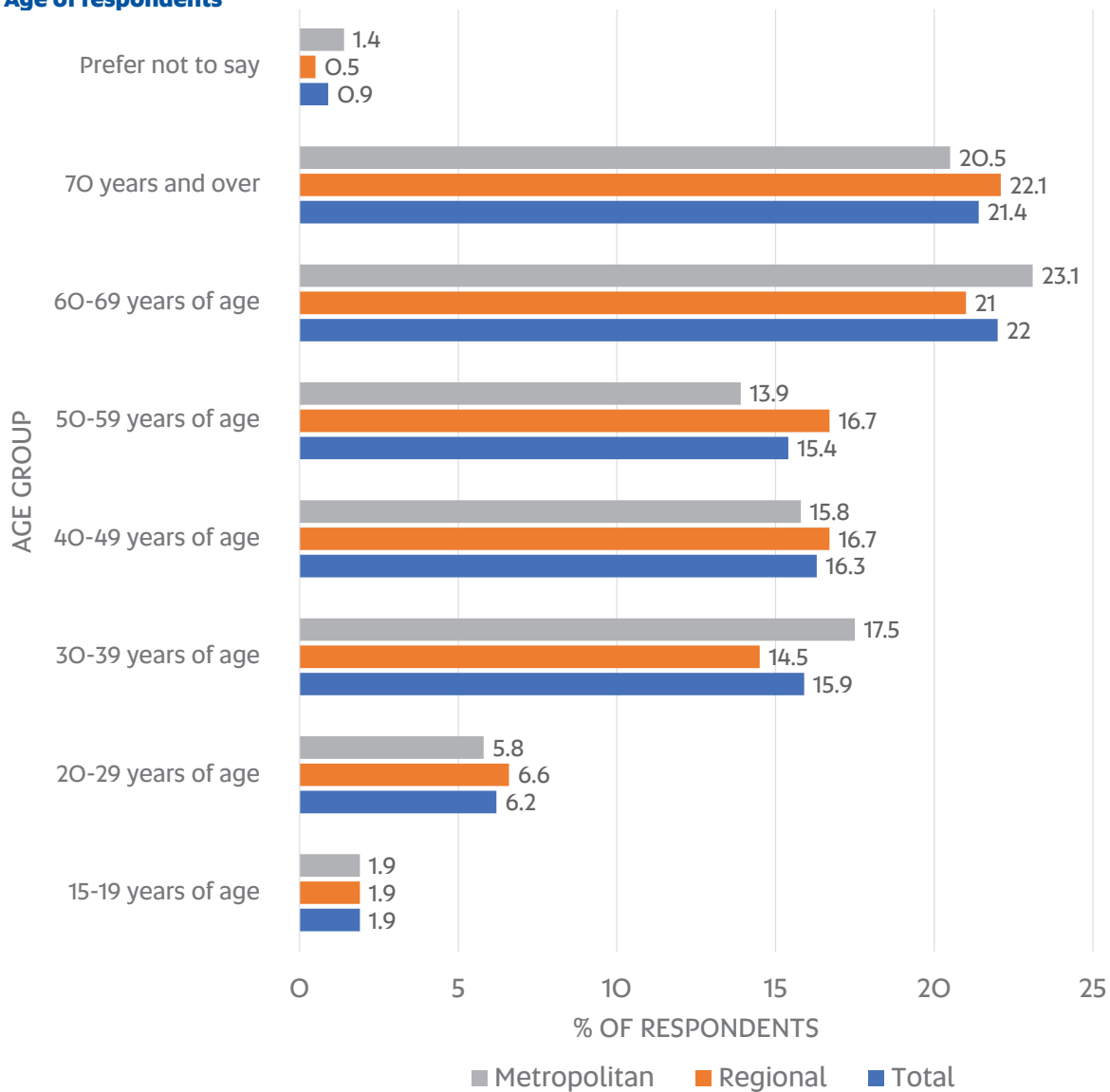
Respondents were also asked about their employment status. Table 3 indicates that the single largest employment category for respondents was 'retired' (38%). As this profile was relatively stable across all 27 individual libraries where data was collected, it appears to be reflective of the greater proportion of older respondents who attend the library, rather than a data anomaly. Of interest was the proportionally low number of students who attended the libraries (3.3% overall).

Table 3
Employment status of respondents

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Home duties (no child care)
- Metropolitan: 3.2
- Regional: 3.5
- Total: 3.3

Full time Parent
- Metropolitan: 5.5
- Regional: 7
- Total: 6.3

Retired
- Metropolitan: 38.4
- Regional: 37.7
- Total: 38

Student
- Metropolitan: 4.1
- Regional: 2.7
- Total: 3.3

Employed (full time)
- Metropolitan: 16.3
- Regional: 18.1
- Total: 17.3

Employed (part time)
- Metropolitan: 25.8
- Regional: 27.4
- Total: 26.7

Unemployed
- Metropolitan: 6.8
- Regional: 3.6
- Total: 5.1

% OF RESPONDENTS

■ Metropolitan ■ Regional ■ Total

The survey also asked respondents to identify their country of birth. Table 4 highlights a somewhat greater proportion of library respondents who were born in Australia (76.2%) than is reflected in the 2016 Australian Census data (67%). However, the higher proportion representation of regional respondents in the survey may explain this (80.8% of the total regional respondents were born in Australia, with 70.8% of metropolitan respondents born in Australia). Table 4 also indicates that 5.5% of the survey respondents stated they were born overseas in a non-English speaking country, with that proportion notably higher (8.6%) for metropolitan library respondents.
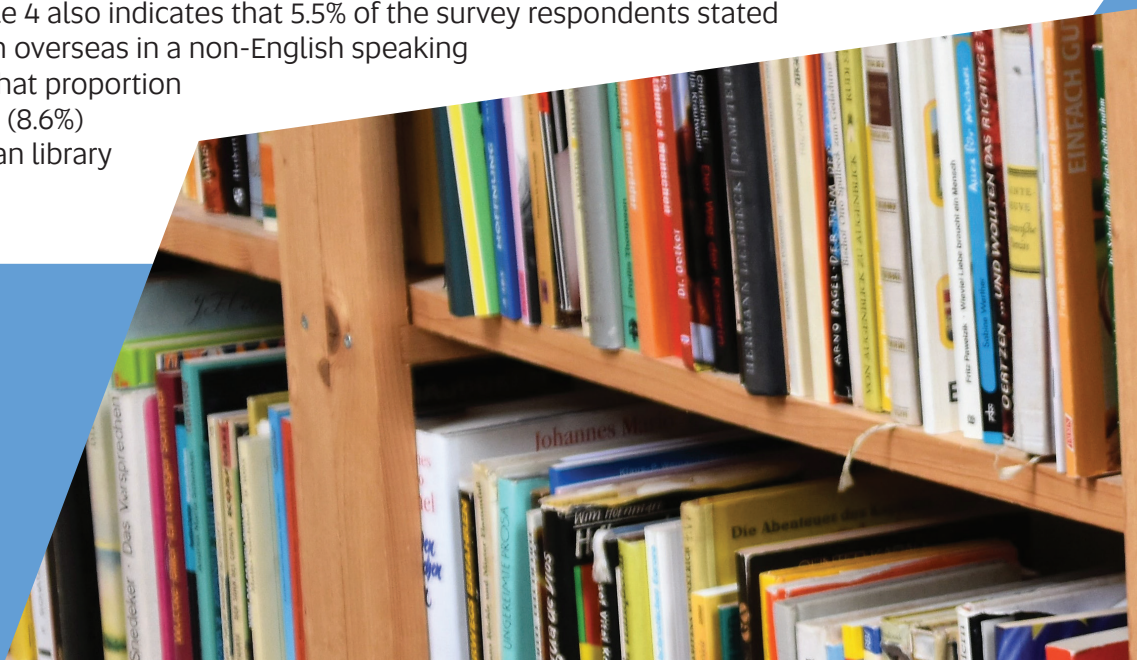
Table 4
Birthplace of respondent

BIRTHPLACE

Overseas – non-English speaking country	
Metropolitan	8.6
Regional	2.9
Total	5.5

Overseas – English speaking country	
Metropolitan	20.6
Regional	16.3
Total	18.2

Australia	
Metropolitan	70.8
Regional	80.8
Total	76.2

0   50   100

% OF RESPONDENTS

■ Metropolitan % of Respondents   ■ Regional % of Respondents   ■ Total
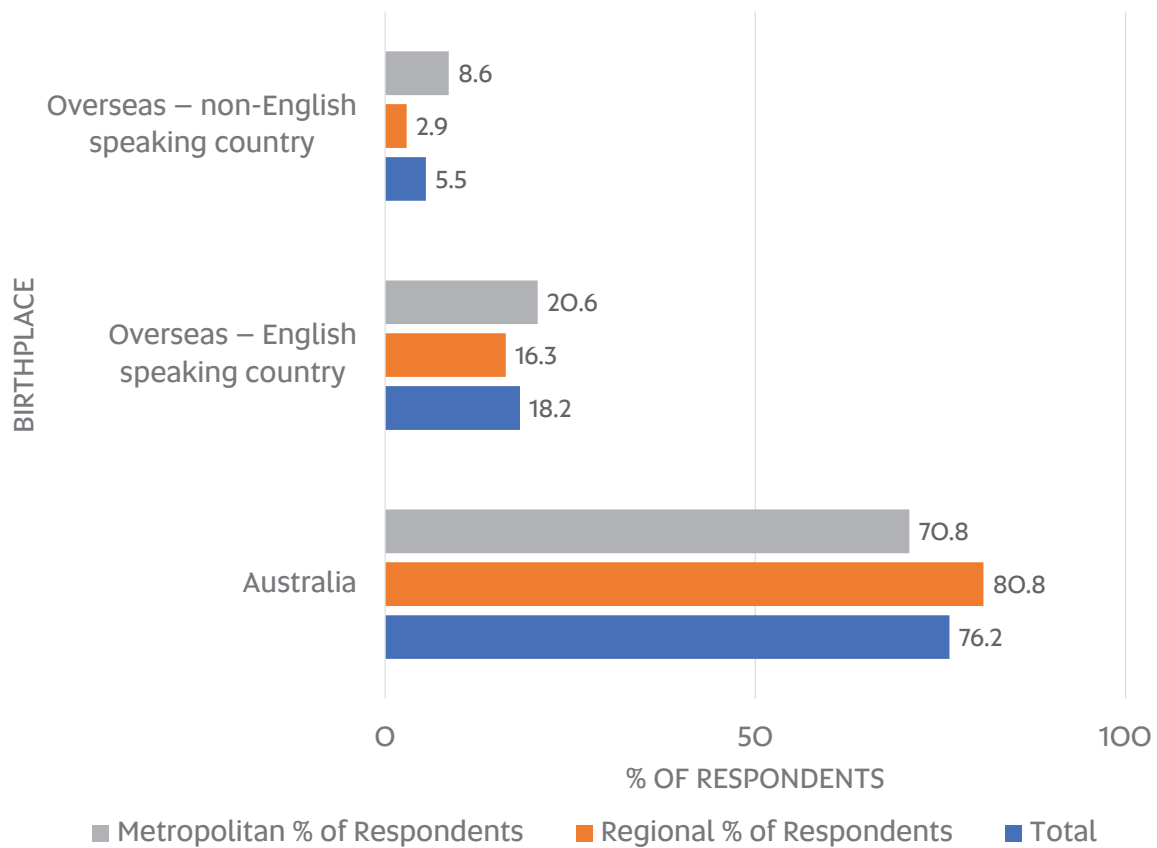
Respondents were also asked if they identified as either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Table 5 indicates that approximately 1% of the sample identified as either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Table 5
Do you identify as either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

ABORIGINAL OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

	Metropolitan	Regional	Total
No	99.1	98.8	98.9
Yes	0.9	1.2	1.1

% OF RESPONDENTS

■ Metropolitan ■ Regional ■ Total
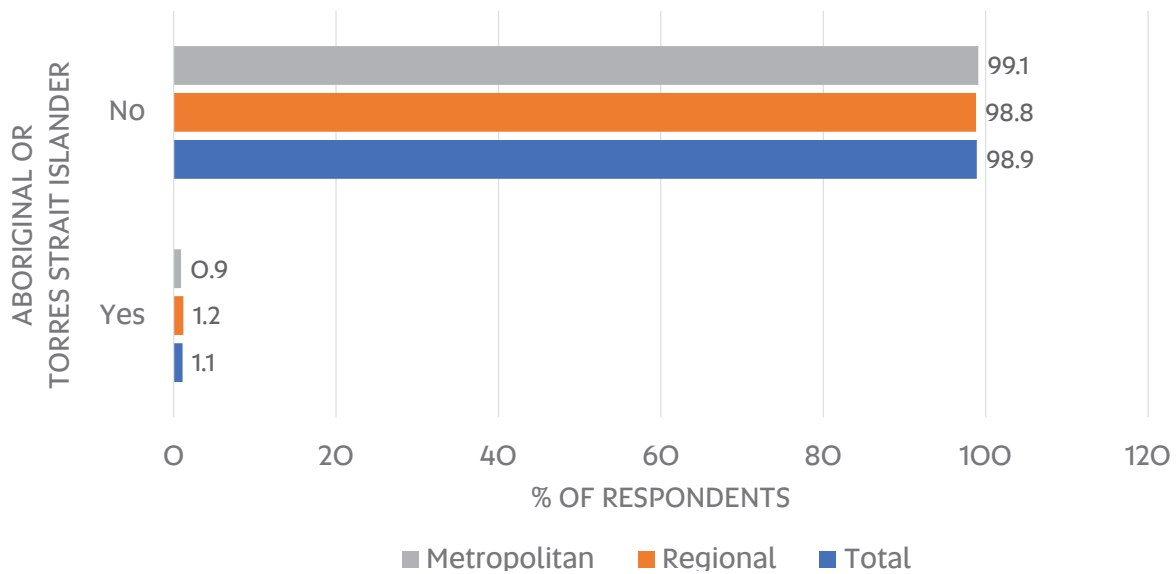
Next, respondents were asked if they had a disability or chronic illness. Table 6 indicates that 13.2% of all respondents identified that they did have a disability or chronic illness with a further 4.6% declining to comment. It was apparent that slightly more respondents from regional libraries identified having a disability or chronic illness compared to metropolitan library respondents (13.8% compared to 12.6% respectively).

Table 6
Do you have a disability or chronic illness?

DISABILITY OR CHRONIC ILLNESS

	Metropolitan	Regional	Total
Prefer not to say	3.9	5.2	4.6
No	83.5	81	82.2
Yes	12.6	13.8	13.2

% OF RESPONDENTS

■ Metropolitan ■ Regional ■ Total
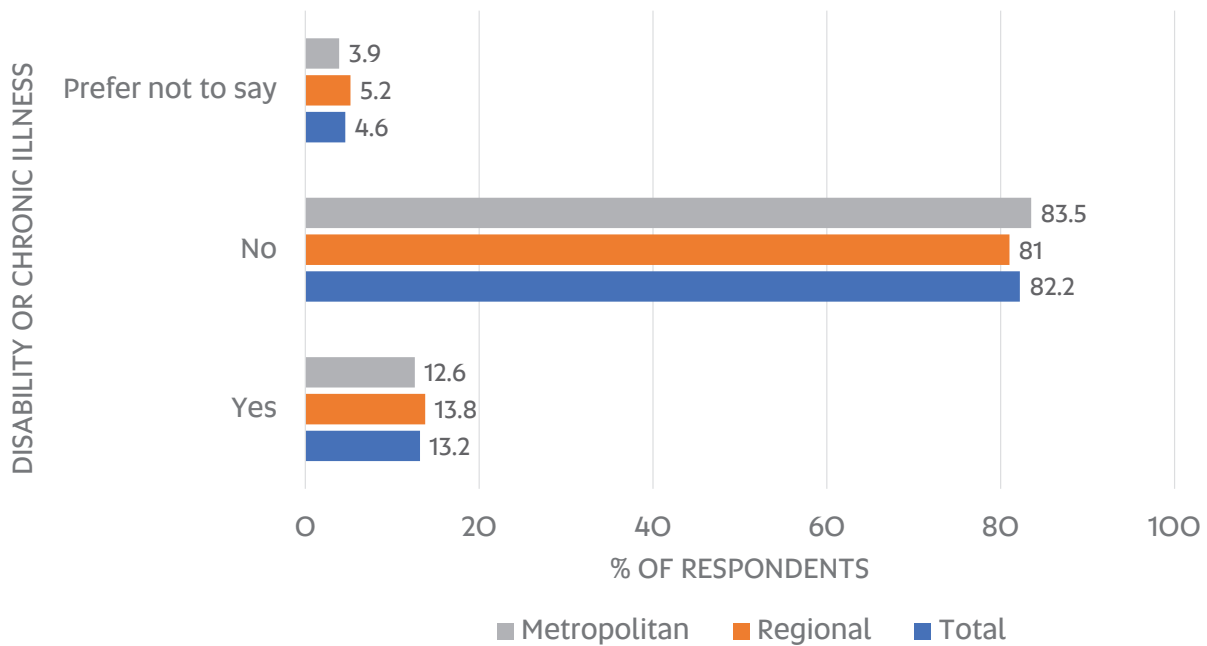
Summary of demographic profile of library users

Overall, the pattern of respondents to the survey showed a dominance of female respondents, with older adults notably represented. This was also reflected in the prevalence of retired people among the respondents to the survey, as well as the relatively high proportion of respondents who noted they had a disability or chronic illness. Finally, respondents tended to be born in Australia, particularly in regional areas, with those born overseas in non-English speaking countries relatively under-represented, particularly in regional libraries.

Library Usage and Attendance Patterns of Respondents

Demographic questions in the survey were followed by a series of questions asking respondents about their attendance at the library. This included questions on main activities, most common times of attendance and the group people attended with amongst others.

Table 7
Main activities participated in at the library (top three combined)
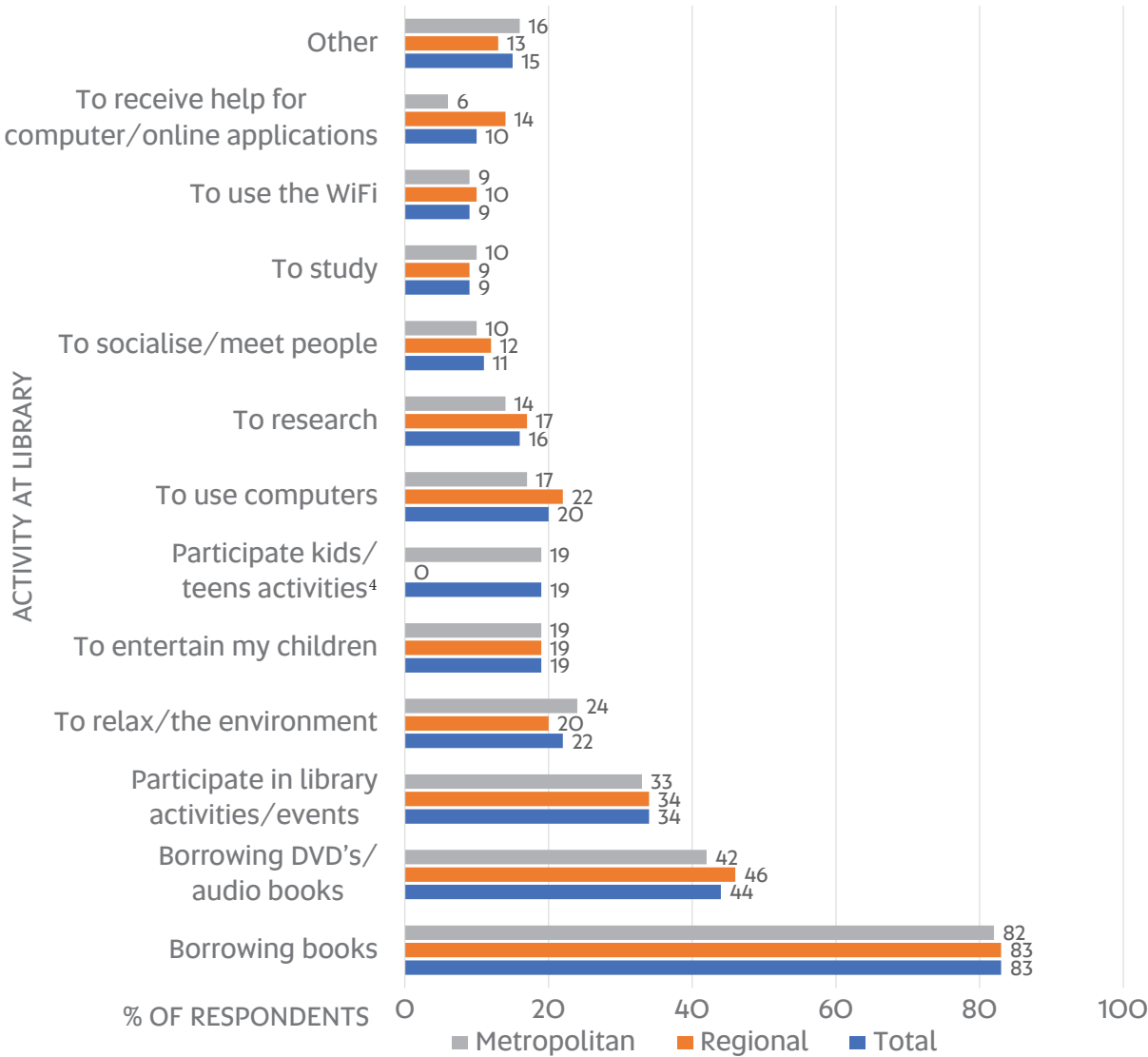
Table 7 outlines the main activities participated in by respondents at their libraries. Respondents were asked to identify the three main activities they participated in at the library. Thus, the total number of responses exceeds the sample size.

Of the top three activities (combined), it was apparent that *"borrowing books"* was the dominant activity at the library, with 83% of the total sample identifying it as one of the three main reasons they visited the library. This was consistent across both metropolitan and regional respondents. This was followed by *"borrowing DVD's/Audio books"* (44% of the total sample), and *"participate in library activities/events"* (34% of the total sample). *"To relax/the environment"* (22% of the total sample) and *"to entertain my children"* (19%) also featured as activities that a notable proportion of library users cited as their main activities. Of note was that this was similar across both metropolitan and regional respondents.

Differences in activities participated in by metropolitan and regional respondents emerged in some areas of activity, however. Of note, technological support services appeared to be undertaken as activities at the library more frequently by regional respondents compared

4   This item was only included in two of the 27 libraries in the survey. Therefore, it is not considered in further discussion in relation to the sample as a whole.

to metropolitan respondents. For example, *"to use computers"* was cited as a main activity by 22% of regional respondents compared to 17% of metropolitan respondents. Likewise, *"to receive help for computer/online applications"* was noted as a main activity by 14% of regional respondents compared to only 6% of metropolitan respondents.

Respondents were also asked with whom, if anyone, they attended the library. Table 8 highlights that approximately two-thirds of respondents (62.8%) attended the library alone, with no obvious difference existing in the pattern between regional and metropolitan respondents.

Table 8
With whom did you attend at the library?
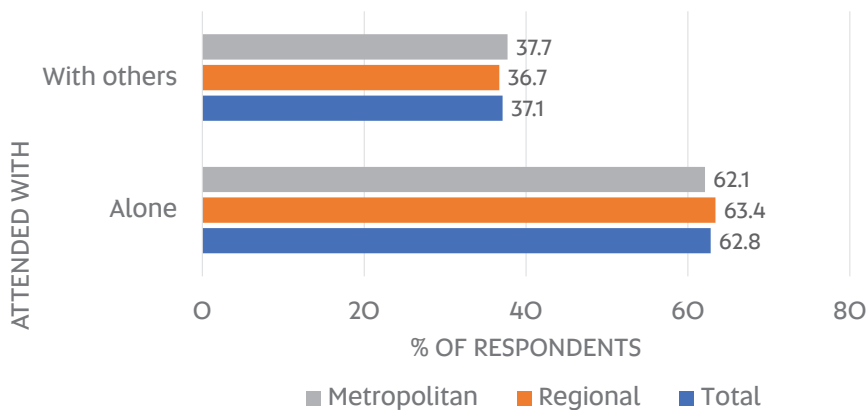
This question was extended, and respondents were asked that if you did attend with others, were there children in your visiting group? Table 9 identifies that if people attended with others, approximately two-thirds attended with children (either less than 5 years old (30.9%) or 5-15 years of age (31.2%). The proportion of regional respondents who attended with younger children (aged under 5 years) was notably smaller compared to the metropolitan sample (27.4% compared to 34.9% respectively).

Table 9
Did your visiting group (if you came with others) include children?
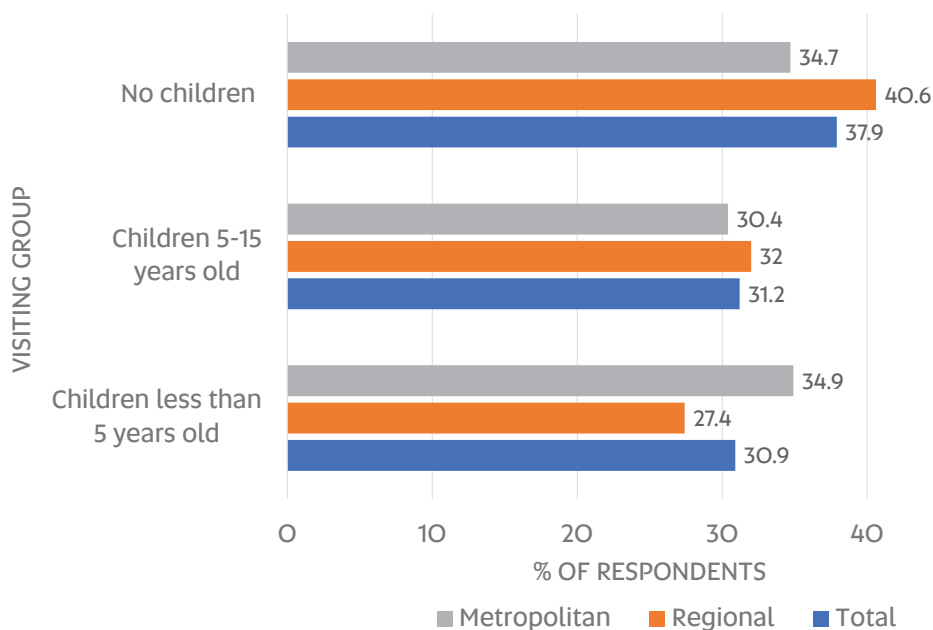
Respondents were then asked how often they visited their library. Table 10 shows that comparatively few respondents visited the library daily (3.2%), with the majority visiting the library a few times a week (31.0%) or about once per month (37.8%). This was generally consistent across both metropolitan and regional respondents.

Table 10
How often do you attend your library?

HOW OFTEN DO YOU ATTEND THE LIBRARY?

Once per year
- 0.8
- 1.8
- 1.4

A few times per year
- 9.1
- 13.7
- 11.6

Once a month
- 39.6
- 37.8
- 38.6

A few times a month
- 16.6
- 12.3
- 14.3

A few times per week
- 31.5
- 30.5
- 31

Daily
- 2.5
- 3.9
- 3.2

% OF RESPONDENTS

■ Metropolitan ■ Regional ■ Total
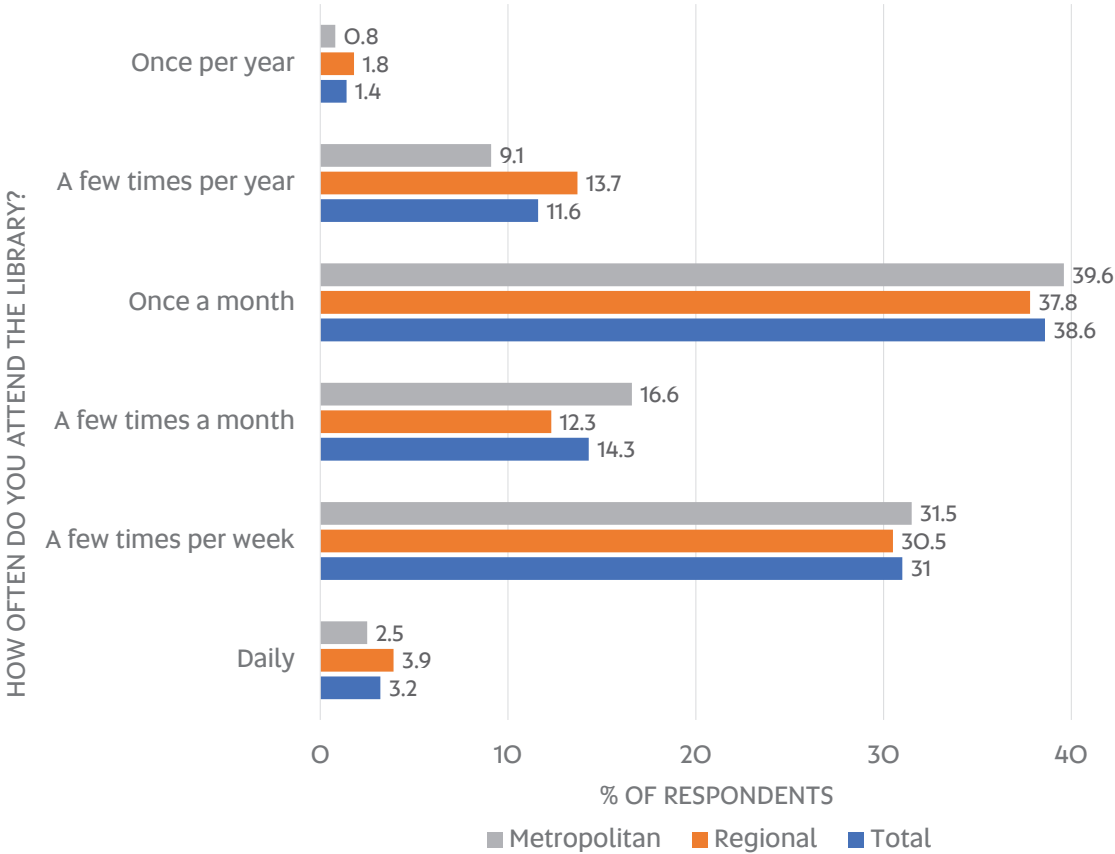
Table 11 highlights the time of day, and day of the week, respondents tended to visit their library. It highlights that the most popular time to attend the library is in the morning, with 47.8% of the sample attending between 9am and 12pm. In contrast only 1.4% attend after 6pm in the evening. This pattern was consistent between both regional and metropolitan library respondents.

As expected, attending the library during the week was most popular, with 87.6% of the sample attending during a weekday. However, metropolitan libraries were notably more popular than regional libraries to attend on a Saturday, with 11.7% of the respondents attending metropolitan libraries on a Saturday, compared to 6.4% for regional libraries.

Table 11
Time of day and day of week you visited your library?
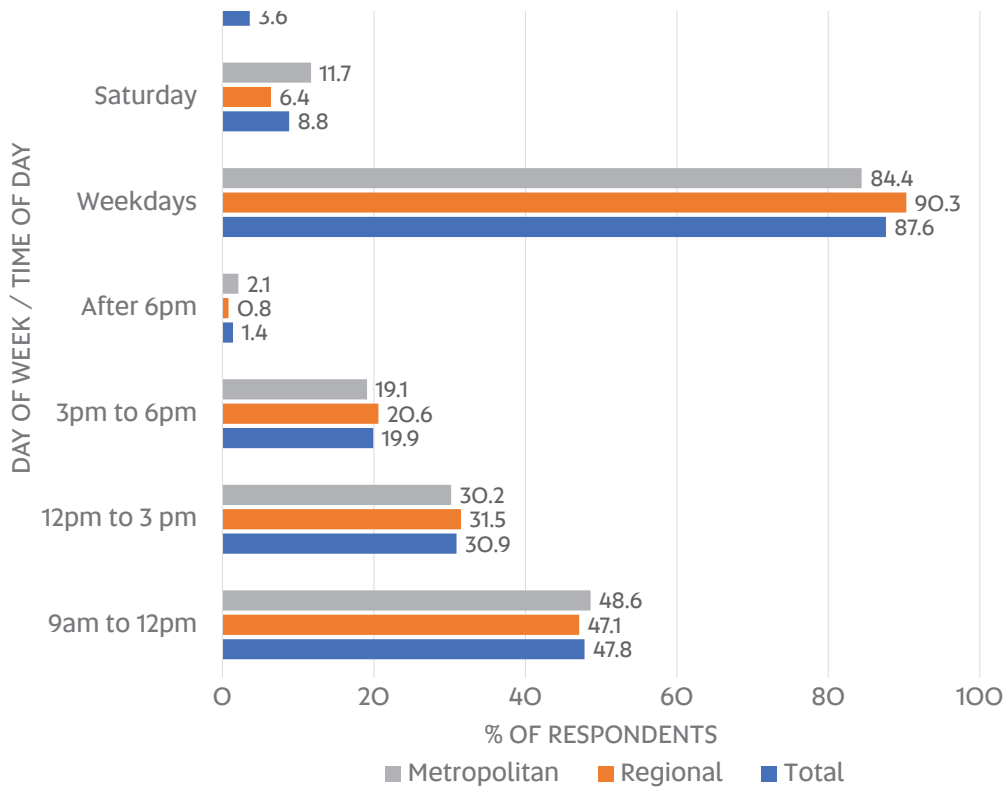
Respondents were also asked how they travelled to the library, as well as how far they travelled to attend the library. Table 12 outlines how respondents travelled to the library, with Table 13 indicating how far respondents travelled to attend their library.

Table 12
How did you travel to your library?

HOW DID YOU TRAVEL TO YOUR LIBRARY?	Metropolitan	Regional	Total
Public transport/Bus	3.9	0	1.8
Bicycle	2.9	0.8	1.8
Walk	18.9	15.4	17
Private car/motorbike	74.3	83.3	79.1
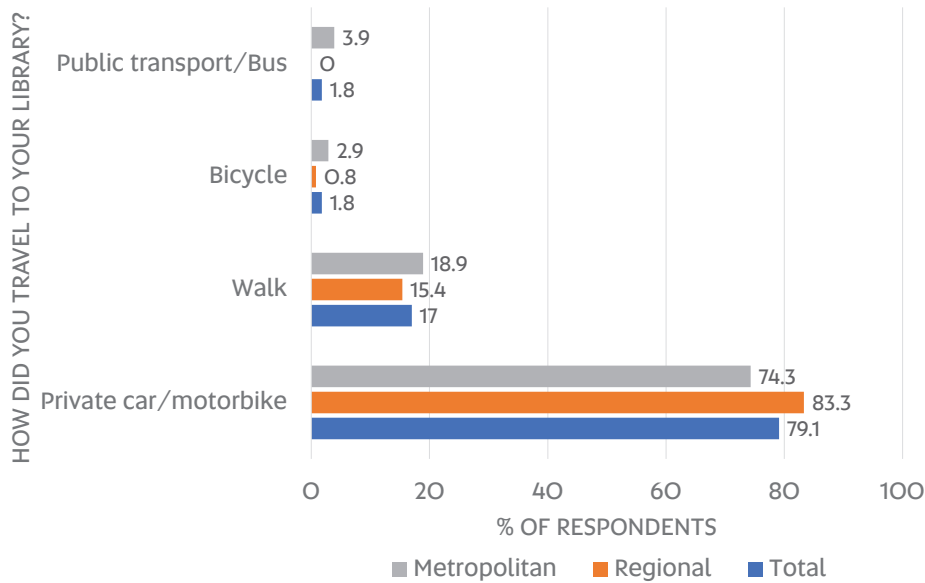
% OF RESPONDENTS

It can be seen from Table 12 that the majority of respondents travel to the library by car/ motorbike (79.1%). Walking, however, was also a popular way to travel to the library, both for regional (15.4%) and metropolitan (18.9%) respondents. Notable differences did emerge with bicycles however, with almost no respondents from regional libraries travelling to the library via bicycle (0.8%). Likewise, public transport and buses did not feature among regional respondents, whereas 3.9% of metropolitan respondents travelled to their library by public transport/bus.

Table 13
How far did you travel to attend your library?

HOW FAR DID YOU TRAVEL TO ATTEND YOUR LIBRARY?	Metropolitan	Regional	Total
More than 25kms	1.8	10.1	6.3
More than 10kms to 25kms	7.5	13	10.4
5-10kms	17	0	14.1
Less than 5kms	73.7	65.3	69.2
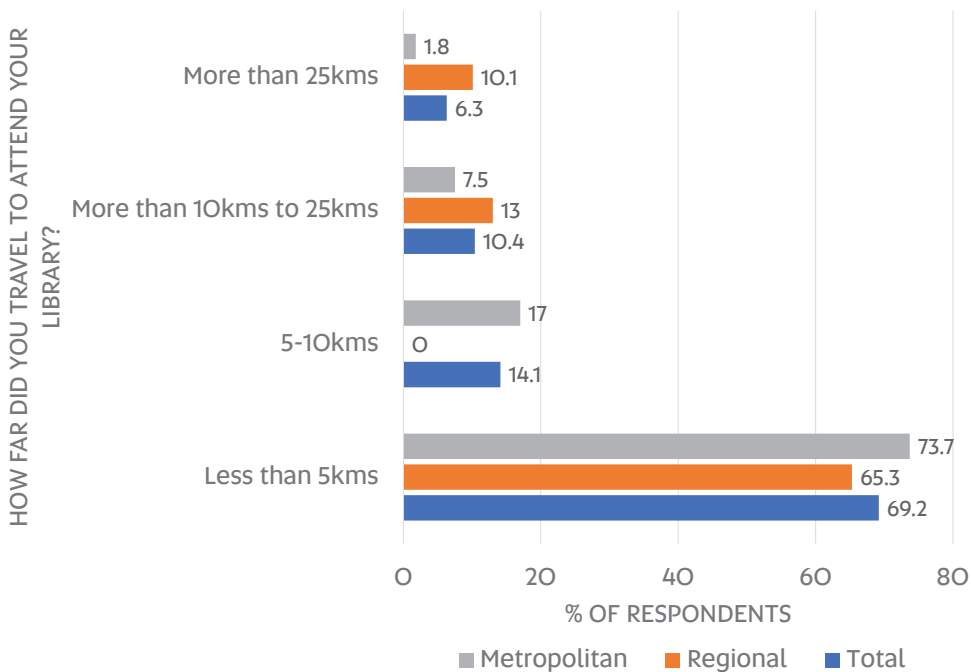
% OF RESPONDENTS

The majority of respondents came from close to the library, with 69.2% of respondents travelling less than 5kms to attend their library. As expected, regional respondents were more heavily featured in the higher distance groups, with almost a quarter (23.1%) of all regional respondents travelling more than 10km to attend their library.

Awareness and Use of Library Services and Information Sources

The survey also sought to investigate the types of information sources used by respondents for them to gain insight into what activities, services and programs were being offered by their library. Table 14 shows that the library itself was the dominant information source for respondents with 71.9% finding information about the library at the library itself. Email and Facebook were also dominant sources of information with Facebook particularly notable among regional and rural respondents (35.9%). In contrast, metropolitan respondents relied on the library website as a key source of information (37.4%) compared to their regional counterparts (19.8%).

In contrast, Twitter was hardly employed by respondents (0.2%), and the Libraries SA app was generally quite underutilised as an information source (8.8%), even though use of the app was about equivalent across metropolitan and regional respondents. Finally, friends and family were more notable as an information source about the library among regional respondents (26.5%) compared to respondents for metropolitan libraries (13.6%).

Table 14
Information sources for library activities
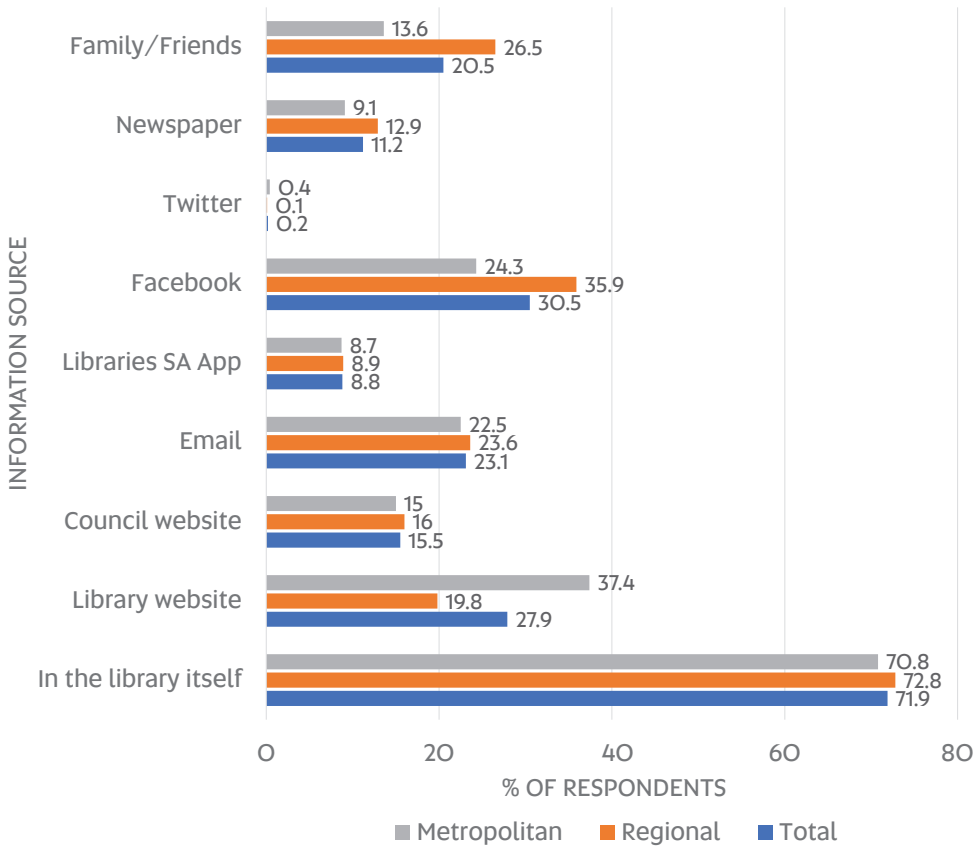
Finally, respondents were asked to identify their awareness and usage of digital product platforms. These focused on:

- Ebooks
- Digital music and movies
- Digital magazines

Table 15 identifies that awareness of each platform was notably higher than its usage rate. Awareness of ebooks was particularly strong, with 72.7% of the total sample aware of ebook services in their library. In contrast only 28.5% of respondents used the ebook services at their library. Likewise, whilst 48.8% of respondents were aware of digital music and movies at their library, only 13.7% utilised the service. Finally, just over half (50.4%) of respondents were aware of digital magazines at their library, with 16.7% utilising this service. Interestingly, no notable differences in any of the platforms (awareness or usage) were found between regional and metropolitan respondents to the survey.

Table 15
Awareness and usage of digital platforms

USAGE OF THE PLATFORM

Digital magazines
- Metropolitan: 17.4
- Regional: 16.2
- Total: 16.7

Digital music and movies
- Metropolitan: 14.4
- Regional: 13.1
- Total: 13.7

Ebooks
- Metropolitan: 29.2
- Regional: 27.9
- Total: 28.5

AWARENESS OF THE PLATFORM

Digital magazines
- Metropolitan: 51.6
- Regional: 49.4
- Total: 5O.4

Digital music and movies
- Metropolitan: 48.9
- Regional: 48.7
- Total: 48.8

Ebooks
- Metropolitan: 74.2
- Regional: 71.4
- Total: 72.7

% OF RESPONDENTS
■ Metropolitan ■ Regional ■ Total

Summary of attendance, awareness and usage patterns of library users

What emerged from this section of the survey was that, not unexpectedly, borrowing books is still the dominant reason users visit libraries. However, regional users appeared to place a greater emphasis on the technological services offered by their libraries in comparison to their metropolitan counterparts. Most respondents to the survey attended alone, although almost two thirds of respondents who attended with others did so with children. Most users visited the library regularly (between once a month to a few times a week), with weekday mornings the most popular time and day to visit the library. Most people lived close to their library, with the majority travelling less than 5kms to attend. Most people sourced their information about the library from the library itself, although Facebook was notable among regional users. Finally, the majority of both metropolitan and regional users were aware of the digital services offered by libraries, with a notably smaller proportion availing themselves of these services.

Service Quality - Operations

A key focus of the survey was to assess the perception that library users had in relation to the quality of service provided by their library through identifying any gaps that may exist between their expectations of different services their library offers, and the current level of performance of that service. The results are outlined in the following tables:
Table 16 (all libraries), Table 17 (metropolitan libraries) and
Table 18 (regional libraries).

Table 16
Mean expectations, performance and gap for operations in all libraries
(N=27 libraries, 4567 respondents)

Service Quality Item	Exp-Perf Gap	Performance	Expectations
Have suitable parking	-0.2	4.6	4.8
Broad selection of books and resources	-0.18	5.02	5.2
Space for research, study & reading	-0.05	4.84	4.89
Be well orientated and easy to navigate	-0.04	5.05	5.09
Have clear, useful signage	0	4.95	4.95
Always have clean amenities	0	5.16	5.16
Good lighting	0.03	5.13	5.1
Be well maintained	0.02	5.17	5.15
Be well organised & well run	0.03	5.22	5.19
Always be clean	0.04	5.2	5.16
Behaviour of others	0.04	4.9	4.86
Have up-to-date information	0.15	5.05	4.9
Suitable number of computers	0.28	4.98	4.7
Provide suitable technology support devices	0.28	5.08	4.8
Programs / activities relevant to my needs	0.3	4.83	4.53
Provide quality children's services/ facilities	0.34	5.15	4.81
Fast, reliable WiFi	0.34	5.11	4.77
Enough digital content	0.44	5.05	4.61
Provide assistance with computer tasks	0.6	5.23	4.63
Provide food/drink facilities	1.04	4.17	3.13

Y-axis: SERVICE QUALITY ITEM
X-axis: EXPECTATIONS / PERFORMANCE (-1, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

Legend: ▪ Exp-Perf Gap ▪ Performance ▪ Expectations

Service quality items relating to operations (not staff) have been sorted from those perceived most positively (largest positive gap) to those perceived most negatively (largest negative gap). Table 16 highlights that, for the overall sample, most items have a gap that is more positive than -0.1. Overall, this suggests that, for most items, current users of the libraries find that the current level of performance of the library in terms of operations either exceeds, or comes close to meeting, their expectations for the service.

Specifically, items such as:

- *"provide food/drink facilities" (gap = 1.04)*
- *"provide assistance with computer tasks" (gap = 0.60)*
- *"enough digital content" (gap = 0.44)*
- *"fast, reliable WiFI" (gap = 0.34)*

rated a very positive gap, indicating the current level of provision exceeds the expectations customers have for this aspect of service operations.

In contrast items such as:

- *"have suitable parking"* (gap = -0.20)
- *"broad selection of books and resources"* (gap = -0.18)
- *"space for research, study and reading"* (gap = -0.05)
- *"well-oriented and easy to navigate"* (gap = -0.04)

featured as areas where the current level of performance in libraries overall was not meeting customers' expectations.

However, another area to consider is the strength of expectation of each item. For example, whilst the positive gap for *"provide food/drink facilities"* may be comparatively large, the mean for expectations for this item is notably smaller than for most other items in relation to service quality operation in the library (expectation mean = 3.03). Accordingly, for many customers, this aspect of service may not be expected by library users to be offered or be considered important for them.

In contrast, *"broad selection of books and resources",* whilst not a particularly large negative gap (gap = -0.18), is considered to be a high expectation of users of the library (expectation mean = 5.20). Therefore, library staff may wish to focus on this item, despite the relatively minor gap, as users do hold high expectations for it.

Metropolitan libraries

Table 17 focuses on the service quality perceptions of customers from metropolitan libraries. What emerges is a very similar pattern to that from the overall sample, with a few notable differences. Table 17 highlights that, as with the overall sample, items such as:

- *"provide food/drink facilities"* (gap = 1.16)
- *"provide assistance with computer tasks"* (gap = 0.70)
- *"enough digital content"* (gap = 0.49)
- *"fast, reliable WiFI"* (gap = 0.44)

still rated a notable positive gap. In addition, a number of other items featured with a notable positive gap between users' expectations and their perception of current performance. These included:

- *"provide suitable technology support devices"* (gap = 0.33)
- *"provide quality children's services/facilities"* (gap = 0.32)
- *"suitable number of computers"* (gap = 0.31)
- *"programs/activities relevant to my needs"* (gap = 0.29)
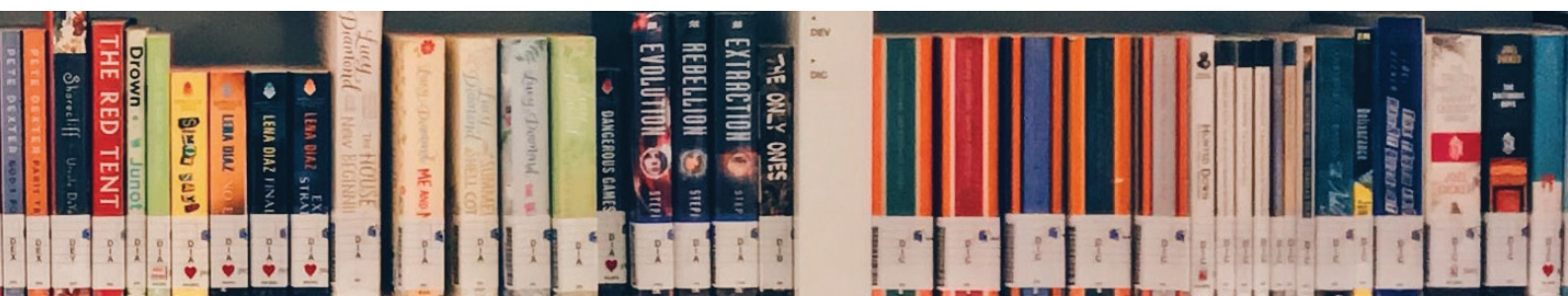
Likewise, for items with negative gaps:

- *"have suitable parking"* (gap = -0.41)
- *"broad selection of books and resources"* (gap = -0.27)
- *"space for research, study and reading"* (gap = -0.11)
- *"well-oriented and easy to navigate"* (gap = -0.09)

still dominated the metropolitan library sample. However, in addition, *"ensure behaviour of others does not detract from my experience"* (gap = - 0.12) also featured. This item also rated relatively high in terms of user expectations (expectation mean = 4.96).

Table 17
Mean expectations, performance and gap for metropolitan libraries
(N=12 libraries, 3090 respondents)

Table 17

Service Quality Item	Exp-Perf	Performance	Expectations
Have suitable parking	-0.41	4.4	4.81
Broad selection of books and resources	-0.27	5.03	5.3
Behaviour of others	-0.12	4.84	4.96
Space for research, study & reading	-0.11	4.86	4.97
Have clear, useful signage	-0.09	4.94	5.03
Be well orientated and easy to navigate	-0.08	5.06	5.14
Always have clean amenities	-0.07	5.18	5.25
Be well organised & well run	-0.05	5.22	5.27
Be well maintained	-0.03	5.23	5.26
Always be clean	-0.01	5.23	5.24
Good lighting	0	5.18	5.18
Have up-to-date information	0.14	5.09	4.95
Programs / activities relevant to my needs	0.29	4.8	4.51
Provide quality children's services/ facilities	0.31	5.18	4.87
Suitable number of computers	0.32	5.04	4.72
Provide suitable technology support devices	0.33	5.15	4.82
Fast, reliable WiFi	0.44	5.24	4.8
Enough digital content	0.49	5.11	4.62
Provide assistance with computer tasks	0.7	5.27	4.57
Provide food/drink facilities	1.16	4.19	3.03

EXPECTATIONS / PERFORMANCE

■ Exp-Perf   ■ Performance   ■ Expectations

Regional libraries

Finally, regional libraries demonstrated a slightly different pattern of service quality positives and negatives in comparison to their metropolitan counterparts. The figures for service quality operation items (expectations, performance and Exp-Perf gap) for regional library respondents are identified in Table 18.

Mean expectations, performance and gap for regional libraries
(N=15 libraries, 1477 respondents)

Service quality item	Exp-Perf	Performance	Expectations
Broad selection of books and resources	-0.1	5.01	5.11
Have suitable parking	-0.04	4.75	4.79
Space for research, study & reading	0	4.83	4.83
Be well orientated and easy to navigate	0.01	5.05	5.04
Good lighting	0.04	5.08	5.04
Always have clean amenities	0.06	5.15	5.09
Be well maintained	0.06	5.13	5.07
Have clear, useful signage	0.07	4.95	4.88
Always be clean	0.09	5.19	5.1
Be well organised & well run	0.11	5.23	5.12
Have up-to-date information	0.16	5.02	4.86
Behaviour of others	0.17	4.95	4.78
Provide suitable technology support devices	0.25	5.03	4.78
Suitable number of computers	0.25	4.94	4.69
Fast, reliable WiFi	0.26	5.01	4.75
Programs / activities relevant to my needs	0.29	4.84	4.55
Provide quality children's services/ facilities	0.35	5.12	4.77
Enough digital content	0.42	5.01	4.59
Provide assistance with computer tasks	0.52	5.19	4.67
Provide food/drink facilities	0.93	4.16	3.23

EXPECTATIONS / PERFORMANCE

■ Exp-Perf ■ Performance ■ Expectations

Overall, regional respondents appeared to be slightly more positive in their perceptions of their libraries compared to their metropolitan counterparts, with none of the items relating to service quality operations achieving a gap of greater than -0.1. This is commendable and suggests no large discrepancy between what is being offered and what is being expected by users of regional libraries.

As with the respondents of metropolitan libraries, regional respondents viewed:

- *"provide food/drink facilities" (gap = 0.93)*
- *"provide assistance with computer tasks" (gap = 0.52)*
- *"enough digital content" (gap = 0.42)*
- *"provide quality children's services/facilities" (gap = 0.35)*

as exceeding their expectations. It should be noted that, as with the metropolitan sample, "provide food/drink facilities" recorded a notably low expectation mean (M = 3.23). This suggests that users of libraries do not have high expectations for provision of such services in libraries, or do not consider them important.

In contrast, and generally consistent with the metropolitan sample,

- *"broad selection of books and resources"* (gap = -0.10), and
- *"have suitable parking"* (gap = - 0.04),

featured as areas of service operation where the level of performance did not meet the current level of expectation of regional library users.

Open-ended written comments in relation to service quality provision (operations)

To add depth to the examination of service quality at libraries, respondents were asked what they felt was the best aspects of the library, what were areas that could be improved, and what other comments they felt notable to add. These were then analysed and explored in relation to the key areas of service quality (operations), service quality (staff) and benefit attainment.

Not surprisingly, one of the key themes emerging from the qualitative comments concerned books and other resources provided to users by each library. Reflecting the statistics presented above, the amount of digital content offered by libraries was praised by a number of respondents who felt that the technological advancements libraries have gone through has met their increasing needs as users. A little less favourably was reference to books, with a split amongst respondents who were broadly happy with the amount and choice of books provided at each individual library and those who were not. Those that wrote positive comments praised the range, the ease of borrowing/reservations/collections, and availability of books. Indeed, a number of respondents praised the One Card system in South Australia, as summarised by this respondent:

"I believe the One Card system has revolutionised the library system in South Australia."

However, there were others who felt there could be a broader selection of books, with some users raising how some libraries had limited copies of certain books (such as new releases) and other users who raised concerns with the move to more of an online system and the challenges this provides to those who lack digital literacy skills. Other respondents had some concerns surrounding the transition from physical copies to electronic copies, although this is likely to be library specific and reflective of the specific digital literacy levels of each user. Reflecting the thoughts of these respondents was this comment: "I don't think the digital age should mean we have less actual books on the shelves", whilst this respondent concurred: "It is really important to me that the library continues to have its physical presence – it is important that it expands rather than diminishes its physical collection."

Outside of books and resources, respondents were broadly happy with the orientation and accessibility of each library. Reflecting the thoughts of many respondents was this comment:

"The library is a welcoming and comfortable environment, very community focused and a great place to visit."

In responses like this, regular reference was made to the location of each library and its cleanliness and lighting although there were a number of comments that stated how some were too hot/cold at times throughout the year and some would benefit from having a cold water fountain to keep library users refreshed. There were also lots of comments surrounding food and drink facilities, with those libraries who had this facility widely praised by its users. Given the finding above, those libraries that do not presently have a café should consider one if the facility would be able to cater for this service.

Another feature of the data surrounding service quality concerned the opening hours of libraries, particularly at the weekend for those who might be full-time workers or have other commitments during the week. As one respondent stated: "A community library should be open on Sundays", whilst this respondent shared similar thoughts: "The library is a community service paid for by rate payers thus should be available 365 days a year." Given that reduced opening hours at weekends can prohibit those who work full-time or have other commitments from attending, libraries might consider the social benefits and capital that can be acquired through devising ways to enhance community inclusion through a renewed strategy.

Although the number of children engaging with each library differed across the quantitative results, within the open-ended responses were regular comments made to the activities and resources provided for children. By way of illustration was this response:

> "A good place to entertain children and to socialize with other babies in library activities and also to study and research for students at school."

In the main, most respondents who referred to children were generally supportive of what each library currently offered in terms of activities, programs and resources, but some respondents asked for a better focus on children, particularly in the school holidays. This is likely to be an important feature for those libraries that have a high proportion of children in their community who use the resources and facilities of their local library.

Reflecting the results above, the WiFi speed and amount of computers was broadly seen as contributing to a positive experience for users, whilst others referred to the need to make better use of the space on offer by creating separate meeting rooms or by creating more spaces where quieter reading or study could take place without the noise disruption of other library users. Here, some respondents mentioned how libraries should have a noise policy implemented more clearly and could be a reason why a majority of library users attend in the mornings where noise might be less of a distraction. However, there were also lots of comments that liked the space offered by libraries, thus supporting the broadly neutral finding raised above between expectation and performance.

Another recurring concern raised by respondents of nearly all libraries was parking arrangements. Although a number of libraries were referred by their users as important 'community hubs', the data highlighted how a large number of library users use their car to attend their local library. Although likely outside of a library's control in some locations, it remains an important feature for users who need to use a car to attend their local library (particularly those in rural areas). Supporting the findings above, there were a number of users in the open-ended comments who were quite critical of what they deemed to be a lack of parking spaces near their local library. This is likely to be library-specific but is an area that can positively and negatively impact on the experience of library users.

Service Quality - Staff

The survey also assessed service quality in relation to the expectations users of libraries had in relation to staff, in addition to the current level of performance of staff. This followed the same Exp-Perf gap analysis employed for the operations section of service quality outlined previously.

Following discussion with stakeholders and library management and staff, the following staffing items were included in the survey. Respondents were asked in the survey to respond to the statements, *"The library's staff should be…"*

- Friendly
- Eager to help
- Well presented (e.g., neat dress, well groomed)
- Identifiable (e.g., wear nametags)
- Competent with the physical collection
- Competent with the digital collection

Tables 19, 20 and 21 outline responses to the staff service quality items for all libraries, metropolitan libraries and regional libraries respectively. As the differences were not notable between regional and metropolitan libraries, a combined examination will be undertaken.

All libraries

Table 19
Mean expectations, performance and gap for staff in all libraries
(N=27 libraries, 4567 respondents)

Service Quality Item	Exp-Perf	Performance	Expectations
Friendly	0.08	5.34	5.26
Eager to help	0.08	5.31	5.23
Competent with the physical collection	0.23	5.29	5.06
Identifiable (e.g., wear nametags)	0.29	5.14	4.85
Well presented (e.g., neat dress, grooming)	0.29	5.27	4.98
Competent with the digital collection	0.37	5.35	4.98
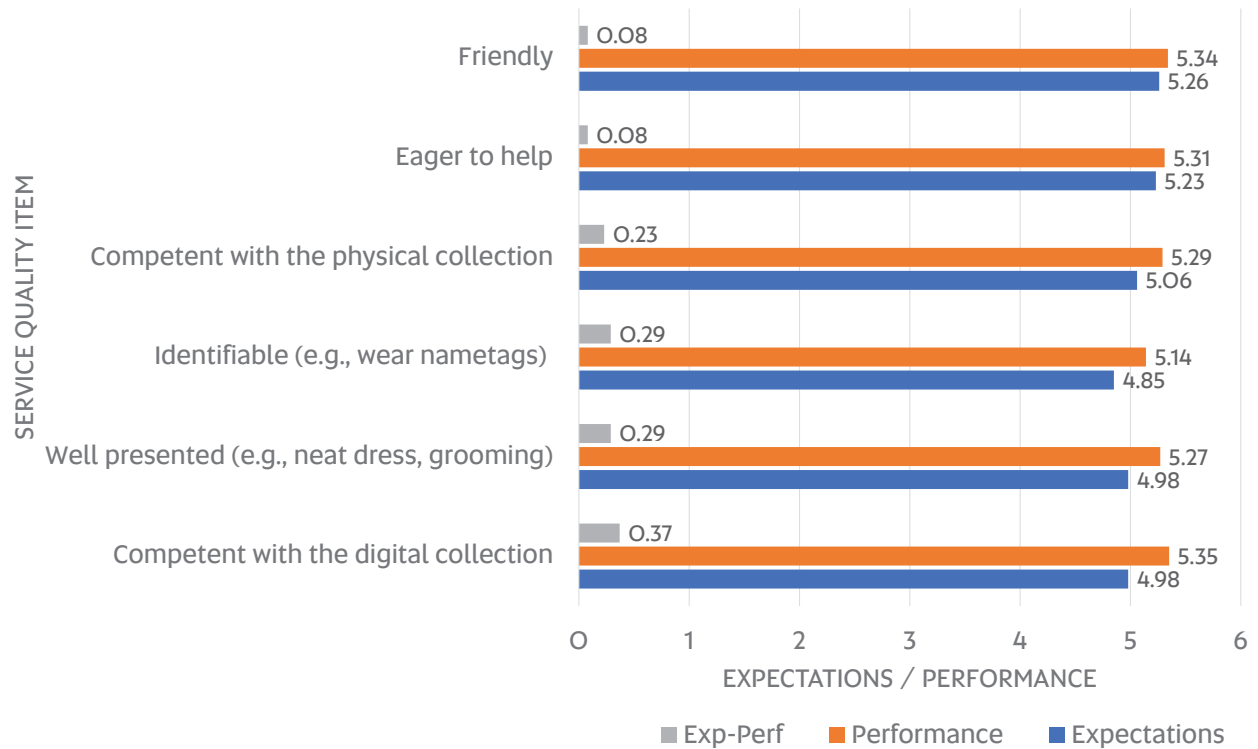
Metropolitan libraries

Table 20
Mean expectations, performance and gap for staff in metropolitan libraries
(N=12 libraries, 3090 respondents)

Chart — SERVICE QUALITY ITEM Title (vertical axis) vs EXPECTATIONS / PERFORMANCE (horizontal axis):

| Service Quality Item	Exp-Perf	Performance	Expectations
Friendly	-0.03	5.28	5.31
Eager to help	0.01	5.27	5.26
Competent with the physical collection	0.19	5.35	5.16
Well presented (e.g., neat dress, grooming)	0.25	5.21	4.96
Identifiable (e.g., wear nametags)	0.28	5.19	4.91
Competent with the digital collection	0.36	5.44	5.08
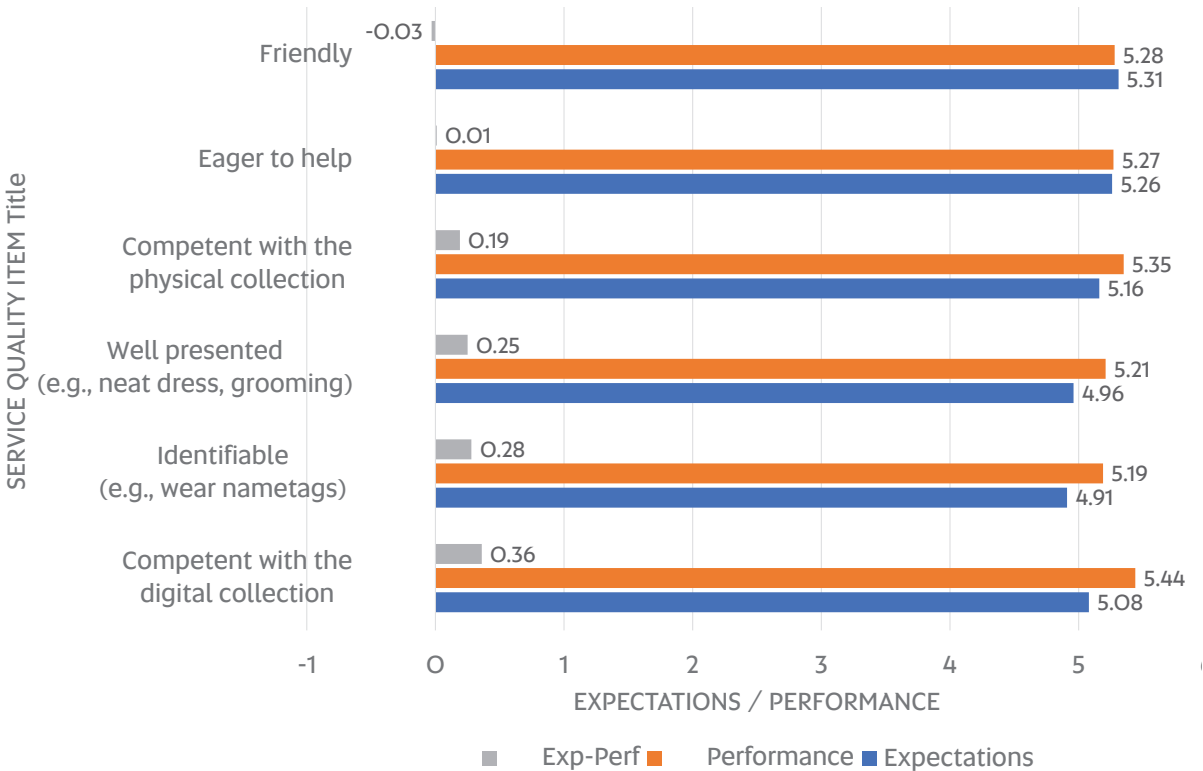
Legend: ■ Exp-Perf ■ Performance ■ Expectations

Table 21
Mean expectations, performance and gap for staff in regional libraries
(N=15 libraries, 1477 respondents)
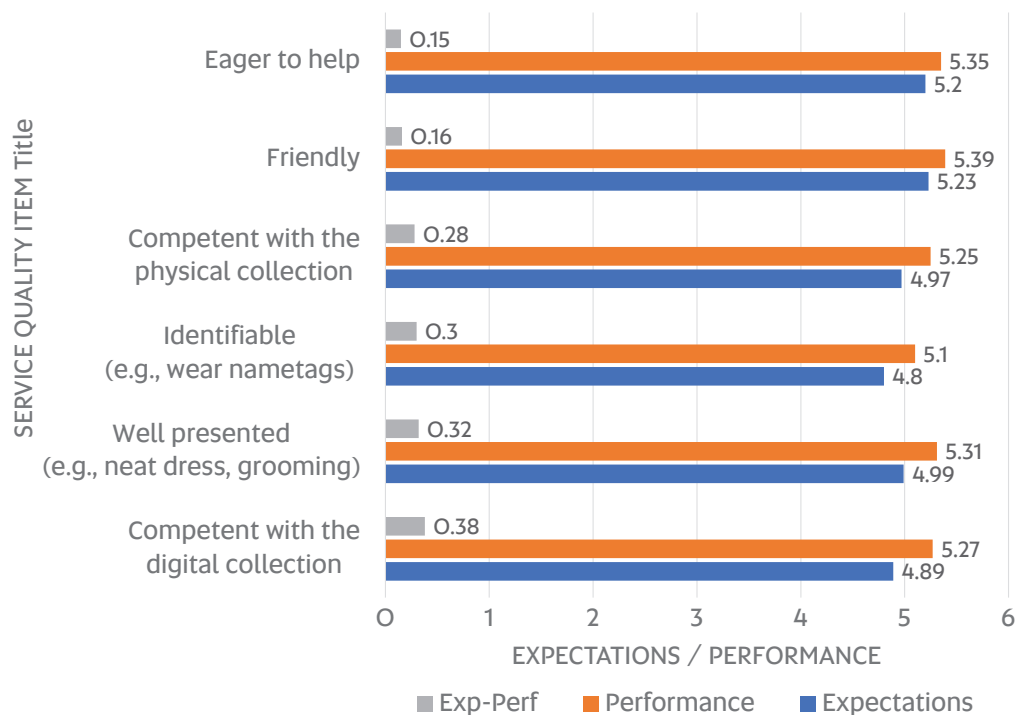
From Tables 19, 20 and 21 a few key themes emerged from the service quality assessment. Firstly, it is clear that, overall, staff are viewed generally favourably by users of the libraries. This was evidenced by only one staff quality item ("*friendly*") receiving a negative service quality gap at all (-0.03 for metropolitan users). All libraries had no negative service gap.

"Competence with the digital collection" was viewed particularly positively by users at both metropolitan (0.36) and regional (0.38) libraries. It should be noted that regional respondents to the survey tended to view staff more positively across all attributes compared to their metropolitan counterparts.

Open-ended written comments in relation to service quality provision (staff)

Reflecting these statistical findings, the open-ended comments about staffing at each library were overwhelmingly positive. By way of illustration was this response praising the service quality provided by staff by stating:

"Awesome staff who are passionate about their community and always thinking about how to engage and fill community needs."

Likewise, this respondent highlighted the role played by staff in the continued importance of a library to its local community:

"This library means a great deal to many. The staff are welcoming, friendly and helpful. They provide a sense of belonging as well as sharing the love of literature and community focus."

Other descriptions of library staff concerned their knowledge, enthusiasm, competence, patience, friendliness and helpfulness in making the experience at each library a positive one. There were some comments on how library staff could make the experience of users better at each library, but there was no pattern or theme to these responses. These tended to be of a highly subjective nature across each library and were often found to be in isolation given the positive nature of the responses by the overwhelming majority of library users who provided open-ended comments to this part of the survey.
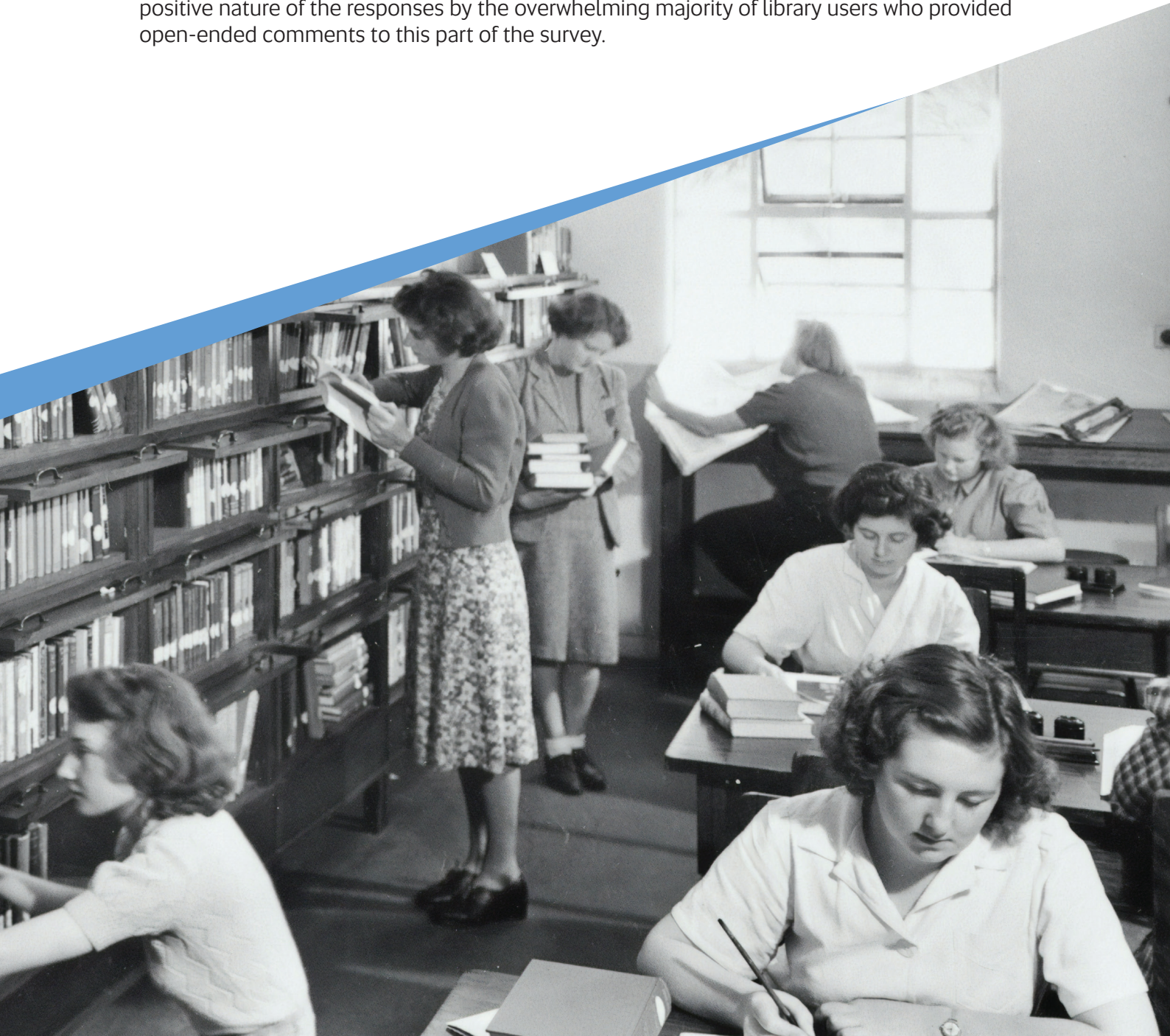
Satisfaction and Recommendation

Finally, respondents were also asked how satisfied they were overall with their library, and to what level they would recommend the library to others. Table 22 details the mean for satisfaction and recommendation for all, metropolitan and regional users.

Table 22
Mean Satisfaction and level of recommendation for all libraries
(N=27 libraries, 4567 respondents)
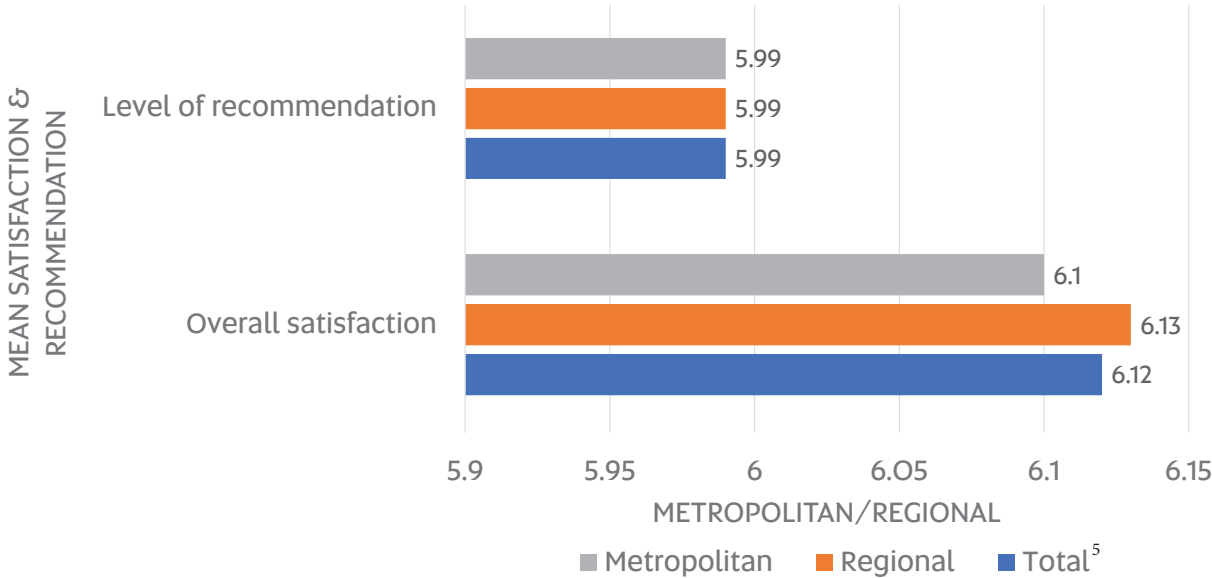
Satisfaction was rated overall as 6.12 out of a possible 7, suggesting highly satisfied users of the library. This did not vary notably between metropolitan and regional users. Likewise, the level of recommendation of their library given by users was extremely high, recording a mean of 5.99 out of a possible 7, with no difference between metropolitan and regional library users.

5   Both items were measured on a 7-point scale, with a higher mean denoting greater positive perception.

Summary of service quality perceptions and customer advocacy of library users

A story clearly emerges of a library service that is performing well, and meeting or exceeding, in most cases, the expectations of their users. Two areas that did feature as areas where customers felt there could be improvement were parking and the selection of books. However, it must be noted that this is relative in comparison to how positive other attributes were perceived. Performance in these areas, to all intents and purposes, was still very good. A feature that emerged strongly was both the importance of staff, and how positively staff at the libraries were perceived. Staff are the nexus between library and community and they were almost universally perceived highly positively. This was also reflected in overall satisfaction and recommendation of the library, areas that were again very positive.

Benefits – Importance and Attainment

The final main section of the study focused on the role that libraries play to the quality of life and well-being of their users. This was operationalised as the benefits that visiting the library gives to the user – in essence, why do they attend and what are the outcomes they gain from their attendance?

The study assessed this by employing the expectancy-disconfirmation framework as used in the service quality component of the survey. However, rather than expectations and performance, the importance of the benefit to the user, and how well it was attained, was assessed. The gap between the level of importance assigned to the benefit, and how well it was attained, constituted the expectancy-disconfirmation gap for benefits.

Following discussion with stakeholders, and being informed by previous research in the area, the following benefits were included for assessment in the survey:

- Improved education
- Enjoyment
- Relaxation
- Socialising with friends and/or family
- Improved well-being
- Improved feeling of connection with my community
- Improved confidence in myself and my abilities with technology
- Helps financially

Tables 23, 24 and 25 identify the importance, level of attainment, and gap between importance and attainment of each benefit for all libraries, metropolitan libraries and regional library respondents respectively. As there are no notable differences in findings based on library type, discussion will be based around benefits as a whole, rather than divided into the three categories.

Table 23
Mean benefit importance, attainment and gap for all libraries
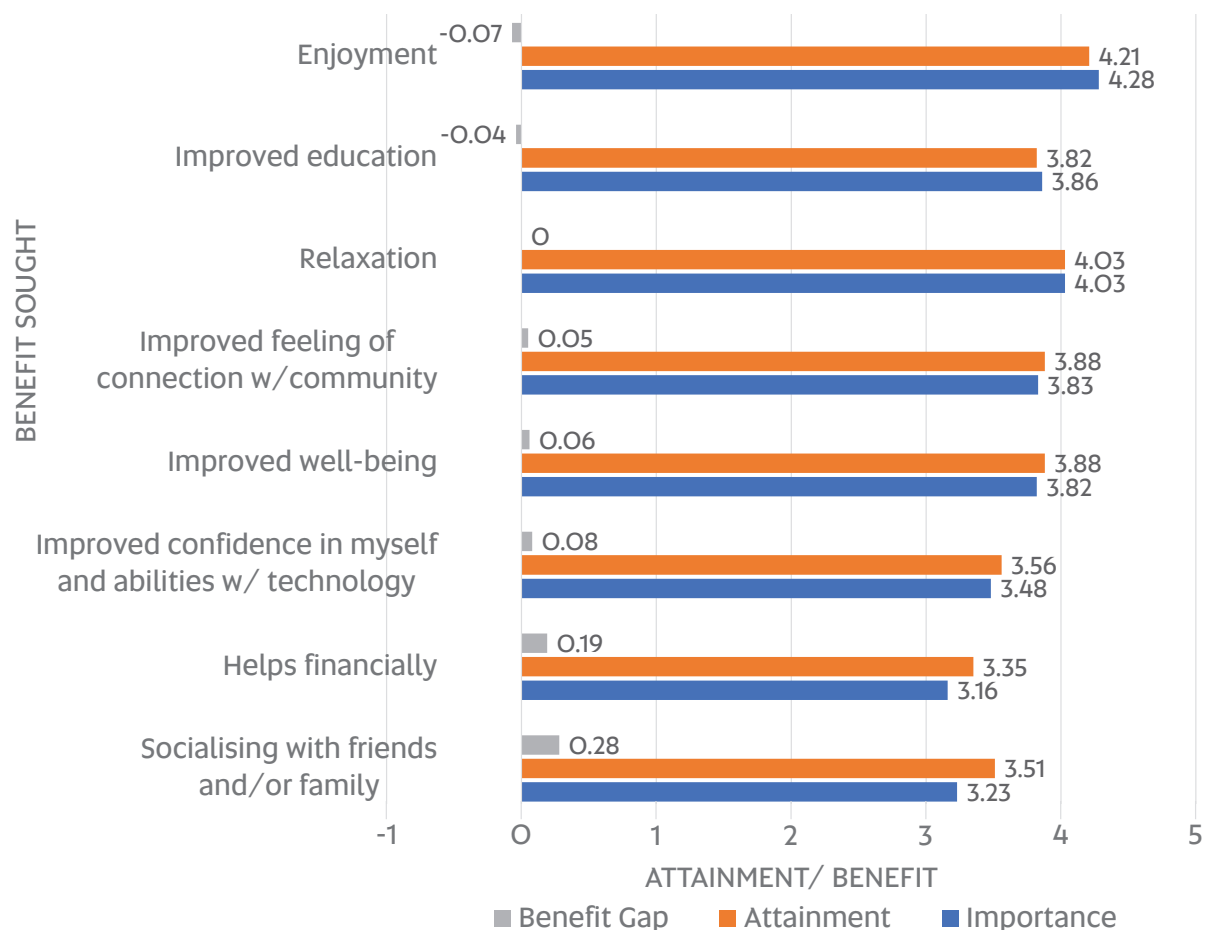**(N=27 libraries, 4567 respondents)**

Table 24
Mean benefit importance, attainment and gap for metropolitan libraries
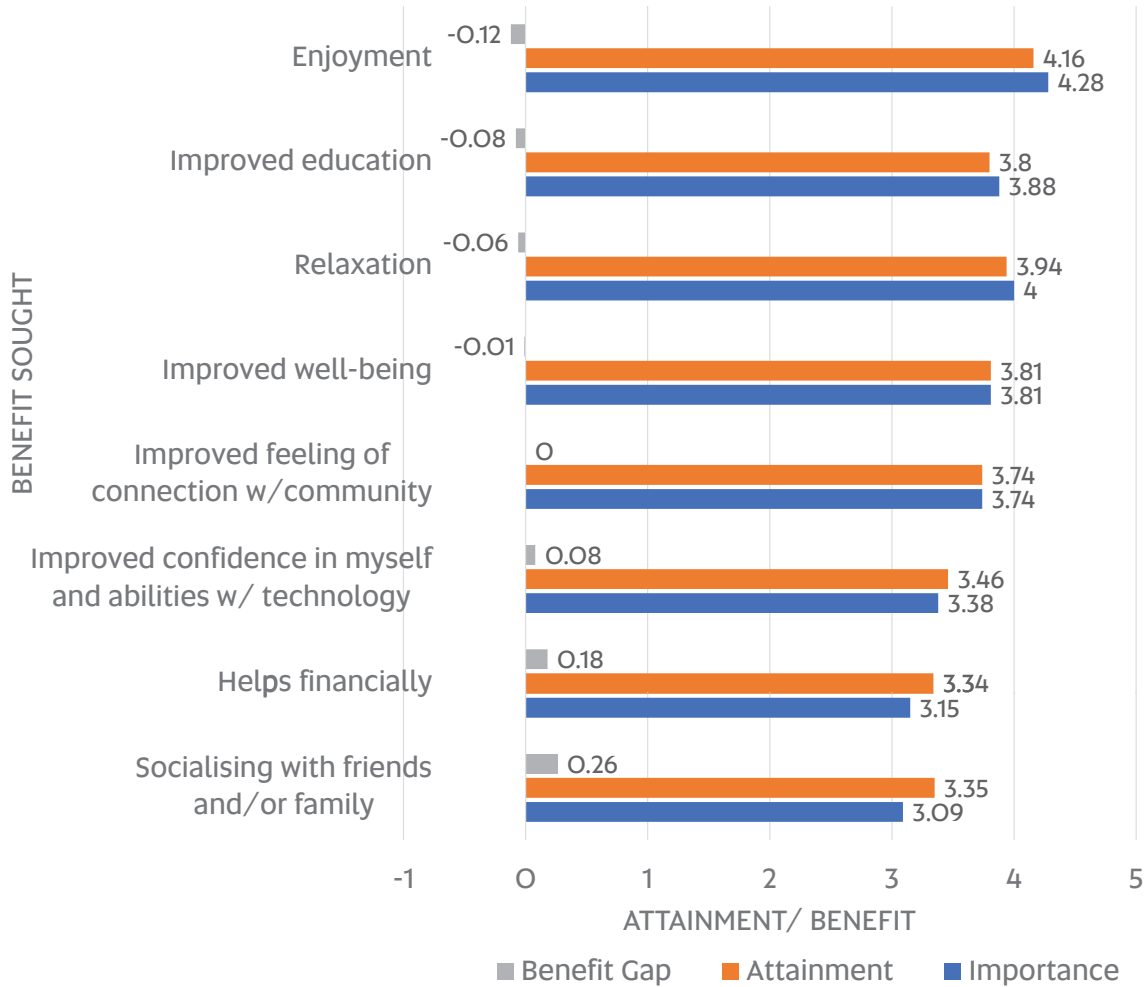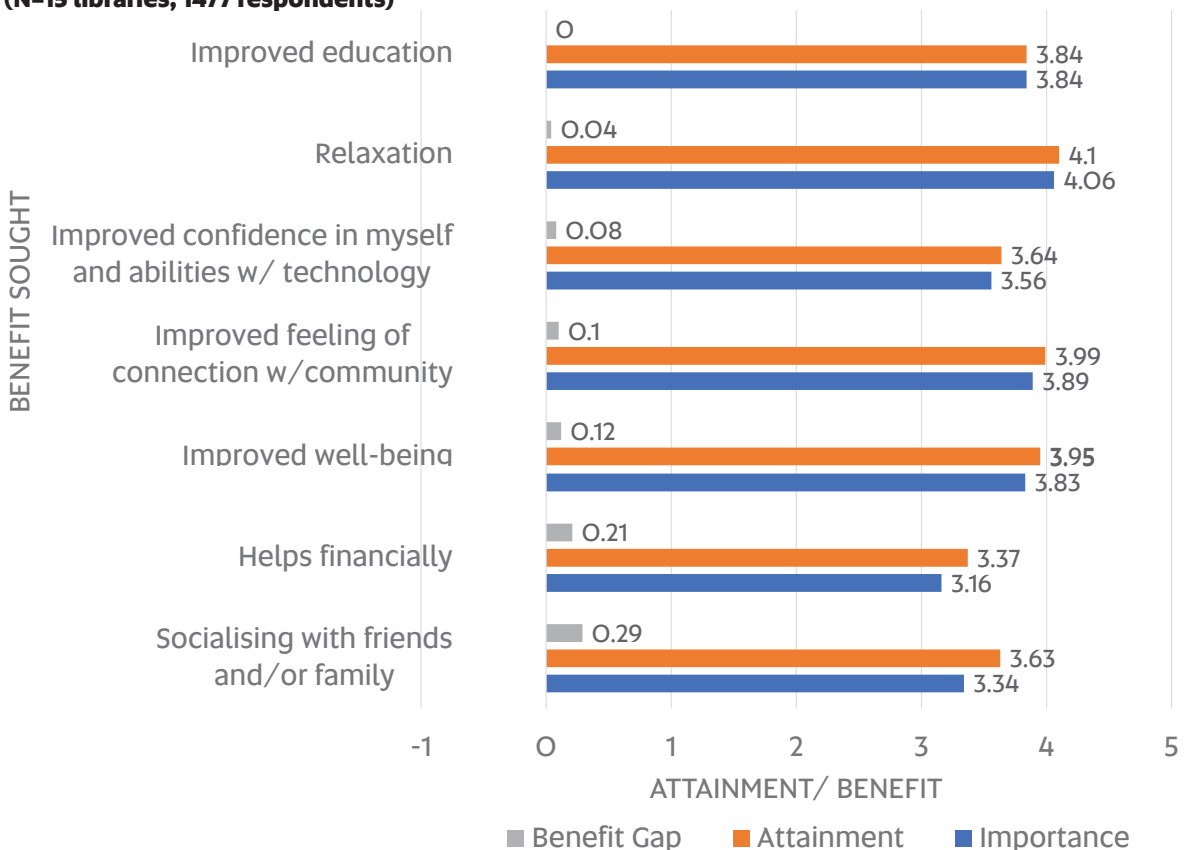**(N=12 libraries, 3090 respondents)**

BENEFIT SOUGHT	Benefit Gap	Attainment	Importance
Enjoyment	-0.12	4.16	4.28
Improved education	-0.08	3.8	3.88
Relaxation	-0.06	3.94	4
Improved well-being	-0.01	3.81	3.81
Improved feeling of connection w/community	0	3.74	3.74
Improved confidence in myself and abilities w/ technology	0.08	3.46	3.38
Helps financially	0.18	3.34	3.15
Socialising with friends and/or family	0.26	3.35	3.09

ATTAINMENT/ BENEFIT

■ Benefit Gap   ■ Attainment   ■ Importance

Table 25
Mean benefit importance, attainment and gap for regional libraries
(N=15 libraries, 1477 respondents)

BENEFIT SOUGHT	Benefit Gap	Attainment	Importance
Improved education	0	3.84	3.84
Relaxation	0.04	4.1	4.06
Improved confidence in myself and abilities w/ technology	0.08	3.64	3.56
Improved feeling of connection w/community	0.1	3.99	3.89
Improved well-being	0.12	3.95	3.83
Helps financially	0.21	3.37	3.16
Socialising with friends and/or family	0.29	3.63	3.34

ATTAINMENT/ BENEFIT

■ Benefit Gap   ■ Attainment   ■ Importance

There are a number of noteworthy points that emerged from the survey in relation to benefits and their attainment. Firstly, the key benefits that users of the libraries are seeking from their attendance at the library generally are either attained, or close to being attained. No gap in any of the three categories exceeds -0.30, indicating that, in general, users are attaining what they seek at the library.

Secondly, it is apparent that certain benefits are consistently ranked as more important for library attendance compared to others. For example:

- Enjoyment
- Relaxation

ranked above 4 (out of 5) in terms of the importance it was assigned by respondents. This hardly varied between regional and metropolitan library users. Likewise, both:

- Socialising with friends and/or family
- Helps financially

rated notably lower in terms of importance for users, rating 3.28 and 3.16 respectively in terms of importance across all libraries. Again, no notable difference between regional and metropolitan respondents was noted.

Finally, it was apparent that both:

- Enjoyment
- Improved education

attained the most positive gaps between importance and attainment, indicating that, in general at both regional and metropolitan libraries, these key benefit outcomes are being met by users of the libraries.

Open-ended written comments in relation to benefits from library attendance

Across the open-ended comments a large number of respondents recognised the role of the library and the education, health and wellbeing benefits and social capital it provides to them as individuals as well as the wider local community. A consistent response was how people could not survive without the local library such is its importance to their quality of life. Of particular note was the level of enjoyment and relaxing atmosphere they found in their library, thus supporting the statistical findings raised above. Indeed, some older respondents openly highlighted the social benefits provided by their library, as illustrated by this example: "Look after the older population to stay healthy and have activities that will make them come together to keep them from getting lonely and sick." However, the social capital generated by a library does not concern a particular age group and this was also a feature across the data. As one respondent explained:

"The library has been a really important place for me and my family, especially when I first migrated from overseas. Looking for work, not having home internet, having a safe place to go not just for work but also for relaxation. I can't begin to say how important it is. It still remains this way now that I am employed. We still don't have home internet and I still really enjoy going and just picking up a stack of books to enjoy. I can't overstate the importance of the library to those of us who are lower to middle income. I have done a lot of self-improvement from the books I've been able to access through the library."

Supporting the findings raised earlier in this report, a number of respondents highlighted the café as an important benefit as it positively contributed towards their enjoyment and relaxation when attending the library. For many respondents who referred to this, it was a place where a conversation can take place outside of the quietness of the main section of the library and it also encouraged library users to stay on the premises for longer to either relax or to socialise. As this respondent explained:

> "The library is more relaxing and you meet lovely people in the community."

It can also help lead to the forming of social groups and reduce social isolation, as explained by this respondent:

> "The social group is great for isolated people. I see people laughing in it and chatting."

Given the social benefits and capital that libraries contribute to the local community it was not surprising to read comments imploring their continued existence as a community asset across South Australia. As this respondent outlined: "The library is the council's most important asset – it should have better funding and physical facilities", whilst this respondent stated: "On a limited budget my local library provides excellent service with activities and events for a range of customers."

Although some respondents praised the communication from libraries surrounding activities, events and services, others felt that some libraries could create better links with the local community to really advertise the benefits libraries can provide to people. Some commentary concerned a lack of awareness of services the library provides, such as digital books and magazines, with their knowledge only generated by responding to the survey used for this project. Hence, it was not surprising to see responses indicating how users would benefit from their local library putting on courses on how to use digital services: "I would like to have more access to learn new technology at the library', said this respondent. As well as better advertising new book acquisitions and services to library users, other participants said their library could advertise more community events, speakers, courses and workshops to generate greater community inclusion in the local library.

Summary of the benefits of library attendance for library users

The library provides a critical role for its users. Comments identified above highlight this, with people not knowing how they could cope or manage if their library was not there. Well-being, social benefits, education and relaxation all emerged as vital benefits that contributed to library users' quality of life. The survey demonstrated clearly that these benefits were, on the whole, attained by users visiting their libraries, again reinforcing the critical role they play in contributing to the quality of life of the community.

Summary and Recommendations

The report paints a clear picture of how libraries in South Australia are performing, their role, the benefits they provide, and who is attending them. Firstly, it is clear that libraries play a vital role in the health and well-being of their communities, providing a vehicle for a host of key benefits for members of our communities. As the demographics of this survey indicate, the library is particularly frequented by older sectors of our communities. Thus, the library provides a vital avenue for social interaction, and network development that cannot be overlooked. Furthermore, it was found that libraries are critical points in the community that provide notable benefits to the users, including but not limited to enjoyment, improved well-being, education and a greater sense of connection with the community.

Finally, it is clear from service quality analysis of the libraries undertaken in the survey that they are, in general, meeting the expectations of their users. In many cases, not only meeting, but exceeding their expectations. Overall satisfaction with libraries, therefore, both at the regional and metropolitan level, is very high, as is the level of recommendation users would give their library.

Based upon the data, the following key findings for consideration emerged from the review:

KEY FINDING 1: *The profile of respondents to the survey strongly reflected an older, female dominated, Australian-born demographic. Consideration of ways to cater to this group, whilst also considering strategies to connect with other groups (for example the youth demographic) may warrant strategic consideration.*

KEY FINDING 2: *Awareness of what is happening at libraries is dominated by the bricks and mortar library itself. However, social media is having an impact, particularly in regional areas where Facebook was identified as a key information source. Twitter, however, is having almost zero cut through. The Libraries SA App appears to have a consistent followership and take up, and strategies to consider expansion of the App and buy-in by users may be warranted.*

KEY FINDING 3: *Whilst awareness of the presence of digital media at libraries is high, take up is notably lower. Given the importance given to digital collections identified in the survey, consideration of ways to improve the usage and take up of digital forms of media may be appropriate.*

KEY FINDING 4: *Overall, libraries are perceived highly positively by their users. Staff in particular were singled out for praise by users, with satisfaction and recommendation also being particularly positive. Any strategic plans or planned changes to library operations should consider the potential impact on this highly positive perception.*

KEY FINDING 5: *Attendance at the library provides a range of important benefits to users. These include enjoyment, well-being, connection with community and education. Stories told by users identified the library as a critical nexus in the community, a hub of social and personal connection and growth that plays a key role in community capital and well-being.*

Appendix A

Participating Library Services

Adelaide City	Playford
Adelaide Hills	Port Adelaide Enfield
Adelaide Plains	Port MacDonnell
Barossa	Port Lincoln
Berri Barmera	Prospect
Burnside	Roxby Downs
Campbelltown	Tea Tree Gully
Elliston	Unley
Goyder	Victor Harbour
Holdfast Bay	Wattle Ranges
Light	Whyalla
Marion	Yorke Peninsula
Mid Murray	Walkerville
Murray Bridge	